WORLD / A19

J.D. Salinger, 'Catcher in the Rye' author, dies

METRO / A18

Super Lotto jackpot may reach P100M

BUSINESS / B1

5% GDP growth seen due to poll spending boost

Tests expose weaknesses of poll machines

By Miko Morales and Kristine L. Alave

THE FIELD TESTING OF THE PRECINCT count optical scan (PCOS) machines to be used in the automated elections continues to be hounded by glitches, most recently in Tagaig and Datumo where elections officials ran a demonstration in selected schools yesterday.

After repeated attempts to transmit the results of the demo vote failed, residents who participated in the demo test at the Maharlika Elementary School in

FIELD /A4

GMA charm offensive goes on campus tour

By TJ Burgonio

AFTER DRAWING FLAK over Malacañang-initiated publicity ads, President Macapagal-Arroyo has begun a campus tour to speak about her administration.

GMA CHARM /A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Saturday, January 30, 2010 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 51 P18

Gibo grilled on GMA ties

RP riding high, heads nix nuke conference

By Jerry E. Esplanada

THE PHILIPPINES IS "RIDING high" as it takes the lead in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) conference which will be held in New York City in May.

The country is also hosting the NPT workshop in Manila from Feb. 1 to 2 which aims to encourage in-depth discussions on the challenges and issues facing the NPT regime.

Ambassador Libran Cabactulan, who has been elected president of the 2010 NPT review conference, yesterday told the Inquirer that "the country is at the helm of this big undertaking ... Mahangong-mahango siya ngayon (At present, we have a good reputation) in the international community."

"We're considered a moderating force. We're also considered nonaligned, not bound for a particular group. We're also labeled

RP RIDING /A2

THE SOUND OF TAPS Senior military officers carry the casket of Maj. Gen. Mario "Butch" Lacson who died when a 35-year-old PAF Nomad plane plunged into 3 residential houses in Cotabato City on Thursday. Already, his men say they miss the sound of laughter in the general's office, "the jolly noises." The remains of Lacson and 7 other Air Force personnel were flown to Villamor Air Base on Friday. They were accorded full military honors.

Anwar to see 'old friends' Erap, Noynoy

By Nikko Dizon and Alyssa Guerrero

MALAYSIAN OPPOSITION LEADer Anwar Ibrahim will be meeting with his "old friends," former President Joseph Estrada and Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, both of whom are running for president in the May elections.

"I will listen to them but I've not been asked (for his opinion on their candidacies). I think I will leave it at that and (besides) the formal campaign will begin in two weeks," Anwar told In-

ANWAR /A4

Jingle will never know if she passed the bar

By Edwin Fernandez and Jocelle R. Badilla
Inquirer Mindanao
Jhannex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas
and Jocelyn R. Uy
in Manila

A STUDY SERGEANT IN THE Philippine Air Force (PAF), Jingle Christy Munoz Llanera took the bar exams last year after finishing law in a Cebu university. She won't be around to find out if she made it when the results are released in May.

Nicknamed "Jingle," Llanera was one of two women soldiers killed Thursday when a 35-year-old PAF Nomad plane carrying her and seven other people plunged into residential houses in Cotabato City in one of the worst crashes in PAF history.

Also killed was 1Lt. Angelina Wahlet, the plane's copilot.

Like Jingle, 2nd Lt. Alexander Ian Lipao also had something to look forward to. His buddies on the ground had planned a simple party for him because Thursday was his 23rd birthday.

Lipao also perished in the fourth accident involving a Philippine military-owned Nomad.

PAF chief Lt. Gen. Oscar

JINGLE /A13

His rivals want GMA tried for anomalies

By Cathy Yamsuan

GILBERT TEODORO found himself in the hot seat at a youth forum yesterday when he and other presidential candidates were asked whether they would make President Macapagal-Arroyo accountable for anything anomalous that happened in her administration.

At the forum at the De La Salle University (DLSU)-Manila campus, moderator Ted Failon asked the presidential hopefuls: "Is there something for which President Arroyo should be held accountable? How should she be made accountable?"

At first, Teodoro, the administration presidential candidate, hesitated to give an answer, saying his previous working relationship with the President bars him from doing so.

"Just think about it, if I participate (in efforts to prosecute her), people would say 'Sabihan mo lang' (you'll just fix it.) If I don't participate, people

GIBO /A4

6 Pinoys back, tell of concrete crashing, crawling out of hole, etc.

By Miko Morales

EVEN AS HER HUSBAND GREgorio was arriving at their flat, Dionisa Bacarisa was still at work on the afternoon of Jan. 12.

Senior Boeing was preparing for his job shift at a casino, and Bonnie and Mikaela Santos were filling up at a gasoline station. Rochelle Cruz was also busy at work in her office.

Suddenly, the earth shook.

"When I saw the fourth floor come crashing down, I thought it was the end," recalled Dionisa, 43, her eyes welling with tears.

Six Filipinos yesterday recounted their harrowing ordeal in Haiti where a 7.0-magnitude earthquake flattened the capital of Port-au-Prince and brought the tiny, conflict-ridden Caribbean nation to its knees.

The first batch of Filipino survivors, who had found prosperous work in Haiti despite its poverty, completed their long journey home early yesterday, traveling by way of Los Angeles.

From her third-floor office in a five-story building, Dionisa watched in horror as slabs of concrete turned into rubble around her.

The walls around her crashed, debris fell on her right arm and scraped her right leg as she dove under a table. Luckily, she found a small hole on the floor under her through which she crawled out to safety.

"I struggled through the rub-

6 PINOYS /A13

RECORD-HOLDING SURVIVOR Pedrito Dy was under the ruins of the Hyatt Terrasses Baguio for 14 days after the July 16, 1990.

14-DAY SURVIVOR

Haiti teen beats baker's record; he sheds tears of joy

By Calderh Maulic
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—PICTURE A 47-year-old man shedding tears while watching news footage of 16-year-old Haitian Darlene Etienne being pulled alive from the rubble of the magnitude-7 earthquake in Haiti.

That man would be Baguio baker Pedrito Dy, a Filipino who lived through the same nightmare 20 years ago.

Dy was dragged out from the ruins of the collapsed Hyatt Terraces Baguio where he had been entombed alive for 14 days after the July 16, 1990, quake that battered Luzon and killed over 1,600 people.

"Sobra akong natuwa noong makita ko ang batang iyon. Alam ko ako'ng ang ang pinagdaanan niya. Paano ba kaming pinagdaanan? May kasabi kaya siyang pangalan? Mayroon pa bang nabubuhay sa kaniyang?" Dy said.

(I was overjoyed to see that child alive. I don't know what she went through. Did we both have the same experience? Did she have dead people around her as I had? Were there people still alive lying beside her?)

A baker, Dy has been spending each day sprinkling cheese over pizza and kneading just dough at a bread shop here. But as soon as his work day

HAITI /A13

1000 PINOY IN SEARCH OF NATIONAL DISH
Ready and revved up in the Team Pinoy jeepney which will be used to promote and create buzz about a search for the national dish. The NDS, for the campaign, a joint project of Unilever, the Department of Tourism and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, was signed Wednesday.

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

PCSO

1 16 31 14 11 29
6 8 0 1 1 0
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1 23 24 27 33 42
P4,764,227.40

SC chief blasts RP leaders

By Dona Pazolingan and Dianne Lucas

AS THE WHOLE COUNTRY SEEMS TO BE ENgulfed in debate over the appointment of his successor, Chief Justice Reynato Puno yesterday swung from making jokes about his impending retirement and lecturing on the kind of leaders that the country needs.

Puno's retirement on May 17 has ignited a fierce legal and political debate over whether Pres. Macapagal-Arroyo can legally appoint his successor despite the ban against presidential appointments two months before the May 10 elections.

"I shall be leaving out of office in a few months' time. I'm the only *state* justice whose birthday is announced in the media," he said jokingly at a leadership forum organized by the Philippine Australian Alumni Association.

Blow-out party

Given the Philippine penchant for hospitality, he said he just might end up spending his entire retirement pay on "blow-out parties."

On a more serious note, he noted that the hullabaloo over his successor has turned the spotlight on "greater institutional issues and has brought about so many host-agate constitutionalists."

In his speech, Puno said the country needed "transformational leaders" who will "reach to the moral value of their followers" and motivate against those who lead as if they were "respecting business."

He blamed the country's present and past leaders for their "self-interest" and "self-serving avoidance" which he said contributed to propagate economic inequality, social discrimination, poor governance, political turmoil and degradation and apathy.

"A transformational leader focuses first to racial/ethnic self to become selfless, to look out for each other, to promote unity and harmony and to give more importance to the interest of the whole more than its parts," he said, citing the late American civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. as an example of a transformational leader.

In contrast to the ideal are the transactional leaders who trap their followers self, he said.

"Transactional leaders motivate followers by appealing to their self-interest. They approach followers on a quid pro quo basis with an eye to exchanging one thing for another, such as jobs for votes or solidarity for campaign contributions. Leadership for them is more of a transaction, more of business where you get your goal through the bargaining of interests," he said.

'Transformational' leader

"A transactional leader is obsessed with the completion of an objective with little regard to its moral and ethical hazards on his followers," Puno said.

He said the country's social ills are "manifestations of self-interest, the results of self-centeredness and the consequences of self-absorption" of leaders who lead and have led us in the past.

Meanwhile, the ABS-Mokay Center has added its voice to prevailing opinion that the President is banned from appointing a successor to Puno less than two months before her term ends on May 10.

By teaming up appointing a new Chief Justice before she bows out, Ms Arroyo is undermining the fragile stability of the economy, according to the center, the think tank unit of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM).

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO troops the line during yesterday's 110th anniversary of the Philippine National Police. With her are PNP chief Director General Jesus Verzosa and Chief Supt. Lina Sarmiento.

SECRET OF LONGEVITY

GMA thanks PNP for survival

By TJ Burgonio

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-AR royo yesterday acknowledged that her administration owed much of its survival in the face of coup attempts and street protests to the efforts of the professionally run Philippine National Police (PNP).

In her last address as a PNP anniversary, Ms Arroyo paid tribute to the police force for playing a key role in the transfer of power when Joseph Estrada in January 2001 and quelling attempts to unseat her.

"The PNP has come a long way since January 2001, when you played a central role in a highly charged political crisis at the start of the decade. You rallied the nation in favor of governance, and proceeded to transform the PNP" she said.

Ms Arroyo, who was then vice president, took over as the new president after Joseph Estrada was ousted by a people's revolt amid charges of cronyism, inefficiency and incompetence.

Coup attempts

"Let me point out to you my gratitude that in quelling the attempts of delusional individuals and conspirators to subvert constitutional authority, you stood by the Constitution," she told the crowd of police officials at the PNP multi-purpose hall. "And you did this without having to resort to force while allowing dissenting voices to air their your grievances."

The President hailed the restraint police for professionally handling various coup attempts, mass actions and "other politically motivated activities" against the government for the past nine years.

"That is why mass actions are now less violent than other administrations in the past," she said, drawing applause. "I admire you and the people admire our police forces, for demonstrating more temperance compared to the past, even in the face of provocation."

After unseating a fresh term in 2004, Ms Arroyo had been hounded by charges of electoral fraud, financial scams, extra-judicial killings and mass protests via Chacha charge. There had been attempts to impeach her in Congress and she prodded to escape enemies of times in huge rallies. She survived all these.

Ms Arroyo also praised the police forces for enforcing martial law in Maguindanao in the aftermath of the Nov. 23 grisly killings of 57 civilians in Datu Unsaid Ngunit town without any charge of abuses.

Kidnappings

Ms Arroyo credited the PNP for stopping the rash of kidnappings of Chinese-Filipino nationals and investors, reducing the incidence of violence against women and children, and contributing to the international fight against terrorism by sharing intelligence information.

El Niño to dampen economic growth

THE COUNTRY CAN EXPECT "subdued" economic growth this year because of El Niño-triggered droughts, sporadic brownouts and higher global oil prices, a government economic manager said yesterday.

The economy will expand between 3.6 percent to 3.8 percent this year, lowering to all the growth, "thanks," according to National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) estimates.

"We're looking at a subdued growth," Dennis Arroyo, NEDA director for national planning and policy, said in a Malacañang briefing. "The global economy is out of the 8.0, but we're still in a fairly strong economy."

The economy grew by 0.9 percent in 2007.

Arroyo said the biggest impediment to growth this year would be higher global oil prices, the El Niño phenomenon and the drought in India, as well as the declining US dollar.

He said a "confrontation between the United States and Iran" could lead "things up" and push the price of baskets of Dubai to $63.70 a barrel in 2008 to between $70 and $90 this year.

El Niño-triggered drought, though mild, "may pressure food prices" while the drought in India "may impact on global rice prices," he said.

The other threats, Arroyo said, were revenue problems arising from a deficit that breached the ceiling of P226 billion in 2008, sporadic brownouts and unforeseen global economic events.

Meanwhile, Arroyo said construction, BPO (business process outsourcing) and mining industries would drive the economy in 2008.

BPO is expected to maintain high growth since demand for BPO services "remains strong," he said.

"Retail and wholesale trade will benefit from benign inflation, the recovery of consumer confidence, replacement of goods damaged from the typhoons and conducive growth in OFW remittances," he added.

Arnie Lim

North plunged into darkness

CAGAYAN CITY—TEN-HOUR power outages at Friday hit more towns in Cagayan and Isabela in Cagayan Valley and in Agusan, Bukidnon and Bugabo City in the Caraga region, due to regular maintenance of power facilities in those areas.

The blackouts from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. crippled businesses in 20 towns in Cagayan, including Tuguegarao City, and five towns in Isabela.

Six towns in Agusan and four towns in Bukidnon, which get power supplies in nearby Cagayan Valley provinces, also were powerless. Thirteen other towns in Isabela had 90-minute outages.

Power supply in Bugabo was restored at 8 p.m.

PNP 'dysfunctions' led to massacre, says Verzosa

By Myalen Ramos

VERZOSA

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POlice (PNP) Chief Director General Jesus Verzosa yesterday said "dysfunctions" within the police force may have led to the gruesome murder of 57 people in Maguindanao last year.

In his address at the PNP's 110th anniversary celebration in Camp Crame, Verzosa said changes have already been in place to rectify organizational issues as part of the PNP Integrated Transformation Program.

He said the Nov. 23 mass murders, which also claimed the lives of at least 24 journalists and media workers, brought to national attention the problems of private armies.

"We admit with all humility the various PNP dysfunctions that contributed to this incident and our resolve to correct those dysfunctions," Verzosa said in 20-minute speech.

While he did not elaborate on the supposed dysfunctions within the PNP, Verzosa cited in previous interviews various local politicians are poisonous for their political interests.

To recover these errors, he said all 1,092 personnel of the Maguindanao police office were immediately relieved and placed under restrictive custody after several policemen were linked to the carnage.

The initial actions were to neutralize the personnel with their assault firearms and penalize errant policemen, particularly those involved, whether directly or indirectly, in the Maguindanao massacre," he said.

Verzosa threw his support behind the special commission created by President Macapagal-Arroyo, the grant of leave to the secretary to look into the massacre.

According to the PNP chief, the commission headed by retired Court of Appeals Associate Justice Monina Zenarosa would help unravel the long-term solutions to dismantle private armies.

"We have also continued anti-crime on the various dysfunctions plaguing the organization that this time has brought forth," Verzosa said, adding that the PNP would present the results of these post-investigation of the massacre to the commission.

Despite the controversies hounding the police organization, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno on Friday commended the PNP for having the "precision of a surgeon."

In his speech after the wreath-laying ceremony at the flagpoint, ng mga Bayani in Camp Crame, Puno cited Verzosa for instituting reforms in the 130,000-strong PNP.

Meanwhile, the PNP honored policemen and police men for their outstanding performances last year.

Supt. Chi Gabriel received the PNP Survey Medal from President Arroyo for reporting members of a detailed robbery syndicate who stormed the Rolex store in the Ayala Greenbelt 3 shopping complex in Makati City last Oct. 16.

The President also pinned the nine medal on Supreme Christopher Olivo who repelled robbers who held up customers for doing Edsa on May 21.

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9710
AN ACT PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PERSONS ON ACCOUNT of ETHNIC ORIGIN and/OR RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND FOR SUNSET TO PASS IT INTO LAW

We invoke the universal principles of respect, justice and freedom upon which the bill is founded. The Philippines being a party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention of Racial Discrimination has set to fulfill its obligation in this treaty.

The Philippines is a multicultural and multiethnic society. The bill seeks to promote tolerance towards an inclusive society where dialogue and understanding among members cultural and faith-based communities are encouraged thereby removing the barriers of misunderstanding and discrimination.

Senate Bill 3071 seeks to institutionalize equal opportunities and access to employment, education, housing and delivery of goods and services and expand choices among the people of our diverse society thereby strengthening our social capital.

Senate Bill 3071 may be considered by 2nd Reading in the Senate during this week of the session of the 14th congress. The passage of the bill is indeed an urgent measure to firmly uphold equality and opportunities for our people regardless of ethnic and religious beliefs.

BARBARA ANN BUENAVENTURA
e-mail: bbabay@i-manila.com.ph

Start saving water, Metro Manilans told

By Alcuin Papa

THE PUBLIC HAS BETTER START CONserving water as the water level of the Angat Dam has been dipping because of El Niño, the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) warned yesterday.

Malacañang should also order all government agencies to start curbing their water consumption, too, said the NWRB, the state agency responsible for developing and maintaining water resources.

El Niño is a quasi-periodic climate pattern that occurs across the tropical Pacific characterized by a warming of surface waters and is associated with floods, droughts and other weather disturbances in many regions of the world.

According to Nathaniel Santos, the NWRB officer in charge, as of Jan. 26, the water level at the Angat Dam, the main source of household water for Metro Manila, stood at 203.92 meters, which is 8.28 m below the upper rule curve that is set for controlling flooding, and 1.4 m below the lower rule curve set for reducing the risk of water shortage.

Still manageable

The dam's normal water level is 210 m.

However, Acting Undersecretary Rosevalyn Ebcaran Quiroz said that despite the low water level at the Angat Dam, the situation is still "manageable."

The NWRB will be adopting a water supply reduction schedule from January to June, when the rainy season is expected to arrive.

The projections are that the water level in the Angat Dam will reach a low 179.36 m by June 30.

The supply reductions will hardly be felt by Metro Manila households as the amounts are not significant, Santos said.

"But it would be good if Metro Manila residents could conserve water," he said, adding that the respective government agencies will soon be launching information campaigns on water conserving.

Water rationing

The last time Metro Manila faced a water crisis was in 2004 when water was available, on average, between 36 to 37 hours a day.

During the 1998 water crisis, the government had to resort to rationing after the water level in Angat dipped to its lowest historic level at 158.35 m.

According to Santos, water supply in Metro Manila has been reduced to four cubic meters per second, from 46 cubic meters per second to 42 cubic meters per second, starting on Jan. 29 until Jan. 31.

From the 42 cubic meters per second allocation in January, Metro Manila water supply will be reduced to 40 cubic meters per second in February; 39 cubic meters per second in March; 38 cubic meters per second in April; and 37 cubic meters per second in May and June.

Monthly allocations

Santos said the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) will direct water concessionaires Manila Water Company Inc. (MWC) and Maynilad Water Services Inc. (MWSI) to follow the new average monthly allocations.

Santos said the MWSS will be adopting certain measures to address the water deficit, such as the activation of "back up" wells; the opening of a water treatment plant in Rosario, Marikina to water from the Laguna lake and supply close water to the southern part of Metro Manila; and the scheduling of water availability in certain areas.

More drugs eyed for price controls

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WILL REview the price controls on certain essential medicines with the goal of expanding the price regulation to include other drugs, an official said.

Dr. Robert Sy, program manager of the DOH's newly created National Center for Pharmaceutical Access and Management (NCPAM) said they would start next month a review of the impact of an executive order that imposed a 10-percent price cut on 23 medicines.

Five of these medicines (antibiotics and drugs against cancer, hypertension and high cholesterol) had mandatory price ceilings prior to the other 18 medicines were outlawed unilaterally by pharmaceutical companies under pressure from Malacañang.

He said they will not only review the impact on prices but will also assess the continued availability of the covered medicines and the sustainability of the program.

"Price regulation is just a temporary measure. Full-scale price control is not the long run," he said.

"All are ongoing therapeutic drugs that were not touched before, like antibiotics drugs, antidepressants, eye and ear drops and even vaccines and other life-saving drugs," he added.

He admitted that some drug retail outlets did not comply with the maximum drug price policy.

"Among drugstore chains, there is a big chunk of retail outlets which are compliant," he added.

According to records of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), out of the 116 drug outlets monitored by the FDA in Metro Manila, 78 were found compliant while 76 were non-compliant.

The Angat Dam also supplies water to farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga.

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) has been told to peg water allocation to these farmland areas at 34 cubic meters per second from Jan. 28 to 31 and in February, 22 cubic meters per second in March; and four cubic meters per second in April.

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₱1,088 Manila to Catbalogan, Catarman or Kalibo (Boracay)
Cebu to Siargao or Zamboanga
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Cebu to Davao, Dipolog, Ozamiz or Puerto Princesa
Davao to Zamboanga
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SOMETHING BDO

THERE THEY GO Presidential candidates (from left) Sen. Grace Poe, Vice President Jejomar Binay, Agusan del Norte Rep. Jose Ma. "Joboy" Aquino III, Olongapo City Councilor JC de los Reyes, Sen. Dick Gordon, Gov. Jun-Jun Casimiro, Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago, Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, Interior Secretary Mar Roxas, Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano and Manila Rep. Amado Bagatsing troop to the College of Holy Spirit of Manila for the first presidential debate on Friday. The candidates fielded questions from students and each other. KIMPOY DE VERA

Gibo grilled on GMA ties; his rivals want her tried

From page A1

would say I did not work for justice," said Teodoro, who resigned as defense secretary to run in the May elections.

"In the end, anyone with eyes in the face can see that I did not retire," he added.

Binay reminded Teodoro that he and seven other presidential candidates—Senators Bongbong Aquino III, Gary Cayetano, Alan Peter Cayetano, Grace Poe, Manny Villar, Olongapo Councilor JC de los Reyes, environmentalist Nicanor Perlas and preacher Eddie Villanueva—were required to answer "yes" or "no" to the question.

The eight were guests at the 499th Rotib 2019 Rico Puno by Pagbabago forum held on the EDSA campus on Taft Avenue in Manila.

Teodoro took a deep breath before answering.

Familiar turf

"If I say 'yes,' I might be accused of riding on the popular sentiment against a party mate and former boss in the Cabinet. If I say 'no,' I would be depriving myself of the objectivity I need as President," he replied.

Then Teodoro was in familiar turf apparently helped. Teodoro is a DLSU alumnus.

Madrigal, who answered "a resounding 'no'" when asked whether she would make Ms Arroyo accountable, was apparently unsatisfied with Teodoro's answer.

At the portion where all candidates were allowed to ask each other questions, Madrigal asked Teodoro whether he would recognize his debt of gratitude having to flock to Ms Arroyo.

"Going to look means paying gratitude with gratitude. But if it's otherwise, nothing is worth staining my reputation," Teodoro answered in Filipino and English.

"So, did the President shower you with goodness?" Madrigal retorted.

"If you are given goodness, you pay back with goodness," he said.

Justice to victims

"But would you give justice to the victims of the administration too? Or would you adhere to party loyalty?" Madrigal shot back.

"Justice should prevail," Teodoro said. "We have a judicial process and it should be observed."

Pabico cut the discussion at this point.

Ms Arroyo has been accused of stashing the 2004 presidential election, of corruption, of human rights violations and of other scandals the latest and most notable being the $329-ZTE ($329-M deal which Mr Arroyo later aborted.

Scandals

As expected, Teodoro's rivals took turns lambasting Ms Arroyo, detailing the scandals that rocked her administration.

Aquino said the President should be made accountable for transgressions "because the people need closure."

"The issue here is transparency ... Whoever is guilty should be punished. Besides, we're talking here of a very long list," the Liberal Party standard bearer said.

Perlas said Ms Arroyo's "misbehavior of sort caused us so much shame as a country," and should thus be made to face the consequences.

Commission to try GMA

Perlas said he planned to create a commission that would involve civil society groups to try Ms Arroyo.

"I would activate a different kind of people power to make this happen," he elaborated.

Madrigal said the "Hello Garci" scandal was already enough proof that Ms Arroyo was willing to steal the people's mandate to preserve her power.

(The scandal referred to the taped cellphone conversations between then election commissioner Virgilio Garcillano and a woman who sounded like Ms Arroyo who was inquiring how her lead in the 2004 presidential election could be preserved while the votes were still being canvassed. Ms Arroyo admitted she was the woman on the other end of the line and said sorry.)

Worse than plunder

"It was worse than plunder. Plus the human rights violations, the extrajudicial killings The Magnificent Seven and I would fire the defense secretary then," Madrigal said, bringing the audience to laughter.

Villanueva said "collective wisdom" had already labeled Ms Arroyo the worst president.

"My policy here great misgovernment. The budget intended for education, health and livelihood went somewhere else. Once I become President, I will overhaul the Commission on Audit and the Office of the Ombudsman because what we need now is absolute transparency," he said.

Villar said the rest took a more sober stand on mistakes committed under the Arroyo administration.

"There are courts and if there are cases filed, I will not lift a finger to defend President Arroyo from any charges filed against her," he said.

Gordon said his job as chair of the Senate blue ribbon committee had exposed him to many government irregularities.

"With the country having many problems, I would submit the blue ribbon findings to the Department of Justice (DOJ), give it one year to make recommendations and let the new bet where it may," Gordon said.

Comelec Dir. Esi Reyes would also let the DOJ take center stage in prosecuting Ms Arroyo since he would have other responsibilities as President.

Loudest applause, screams

If Teodoro had any reservation, it was that he received the loudest applause and screams from the DLSU crowd.

During a break, loud shouts were heard from the students in the balcony of the auditorium where the forum was held whenever Teodoro gazed upward, smiled and waved at the audience.

Beatriz Paz, 19, a student of psychology and legal management, said the appointed Teodoro's way of "not answering a question directly but making a question understood what he means."

Shenia Manila, 17, described the Lakas-Kampi candidate as "a man of wisdom and integrity."

Gordon also had his share of fans.

Students who stepped out of the auditorium noted he was "very charismatic," "articulate" and "was able to say what he meant using very simple words."

GMA charm offensive goes on campus tours; storytelling next

From page A1

another's accomplishments.

Ms Arroyo visited the College of Holy Spirit near Malacañang in Manila Thursday afternoon and highlighted the inroads that her nine-year administration has made in the education sector.

Apart from registering students to ensure free and peaceful elections, she reminded them that during her term, the combined annual budgets of the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education doubled from P60 billion to P120 billion.

The statistics results are the 180,000 classrooms that were built and countless of teachers who trained in English, Math and Science to keep the quality of education at par with international standards and prepare students for global competitiveness, she said.

Legacy

Undersecretary Mary Olivar, deputy presidential spokesperson, confirmed that the administration was consciously mounting a campaign to report on its "legacy" in the remaining months in office.

"It's the duty, not just the privilege and right, of the government to communicate its actions and accomplishments to the public because this affects foreign investors and any countryman," he said after a briefing. "Communication is a good thing."

Don Mariano State U

This was the second school Ms Arroyo had visited in her "campus tour," according to the Office of the Press Secretary it came a day after she toured Don Mariano State University in Batac, Ilocos Norte.

"I'm not aware of her schedule, how often she'd visit schools. But I would not be surprised if she continues to visit schools in the future," Olivar said.

Ms Arroyo, who steps down June 30, is making an unprecedented run for a congressional seat in the second district of her home province, Pampanga, in the May midterm elections.

Newspaper ads

Malacañang has come under fire over its recent newspaper advertisements dwelling on the administration's gains in the economy, social development, infrastructure, law and order, job generation, agriculture, energy, environment and digital infrastructure.

The ads were run by the Philippine Information Agency. Their title, "Gamin Tayo Yoon, Gamin Tayo Nganoy," mimicry-carried the initials of administration standard-bearer Gilbert Teodoro.

A party-list group of journalists and indigenous peoples, Tarsila, said the accomplishments did not reflect the reality of poverty and landlessness across the country.

Cash-transfer program

Yesterday, an official of the National Economic and Development Authority tried to complement Ms Arroyo's campaign by updating the media about the government's conditional cash-transfer program at a Malacañang briefing.

Dennis Arroyo, Neda director for national planning and policy, said 1 million poor households, or 5 million people, benefited from the program at the end of 2009 at a cost of P15 billion.

The program, known as Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, covers 17 regions, 80 provinces, 664 municipalities and 16 cities.

"It's not a dole-out. It's more of an incentive to make sure that they engage in behaviors for long-term poverty reduction. What would left them from poverty is not handouts, but education, and health care and immunization," Arroyo said.

Under the program, inspired by Latin American models, cash is granted to poor households provided the pregnant women get prenatal and postnatal care, parents attend family development sessions, children aged 3 and below get regular health checkups, and children aged 3 to 5 are enrolled in school and attend classes at least 85 percent of the time.

Storytelling next week

Apart from the ads and Ms Arroyo's campus tour, Olivar disclosed that he would be relating personal stories of individuals who hugely benefited from the administration's pro-poor programs in press briefings beginning next week.

"On Monday, I'll distribute stories about people who have benefited from our programs. So we can have human interest stories that we are not alone," he said.

20 BISHOPS AND A PRESIDENT President Macapagal-Arroyo is surrounded by more than 20 Catholic bishops from across the country during the 25th anniversary celebration of the Episcopal Orthodox of Lucena Diocese Bishop Emilio Marquez held at the St. Ferdinand Cathedral in Lucena City Friday morning. ALVIN KASIBANG

Journalist's killer found guilty, gets 40 years

PAGADIAN CITY — Six alleged hired gun has been jailed for 40 years to Cebu City for the killing of a radio journalist, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) said yesterday.

The verdict was just the sixth time a suspect has been sentenced for killing a journalist since President Macapagal-Arroyo came to power in 2001, the media group said, despite nearly 100 media workers being murdered over that time.

A court in Cebu City this week found Muhammad Mudang guilty of the fatal February 2005 shooting of dxRP station broadcaster Edgar Damero, 46, according to the NUJP.

The NUJP and press clubs based in Pagadian City, the victim's hometown, thanked the court for the verdict.

But they urged the authorities to go after those behind the killing of Antero, who is suspected to have been killed for being an eyewitness to a subsequent murder in 2002.

"The circle of the matter is that the series of unsolved murders of these killings were not as yet been brought to court for a threat to pay For the crime," the media group said in a joint statement.

The Philippines is regarded as one of the world's most dangerous places for journalists, partly due to a culture of impunity for those in power that allows them to commit crimes with little risk of punishment.

Three provincial journalists were among 57 people murdered in Maguindanao in November last year in an attack blamed on a local political rival.

Hold order sought for tycoon's brother

By John H. Aurelio

PROSECUTORS HAVE ASKED A QUEZON City court to ban a businessman from leaving the country while he and his family are facing trial for allegedly maltreating an underage maid.

In a rare page pleading, assistant city prosecutor Pedro Bumedien asked Judge Lourdes Gloria to issue a hold departure order against Marlene Tumaglian in relation to the charges filed against them.

Bumedien, the presiding judge of Regional Trial Court Branch 102, is hearing the 10 criminal cases against Tumaglian, his wife Alexa, and children Fayette and Maximilian for child abuse and serious illegal detention.

The case, which was based on the complaint of Tumaglian's former household Mary Jane Sullano, was raffled off to Branch 102, a family court, as Sullano was a minor when she was first hired.

In a family court, parties other than the complainant and the accused are not allowed to inquire about the case.

Nevertheless, in his motion for the issuance of a hold departure order, asked the court to direct immigration authorities to prevent any of the Tumaglians involved in the case from leaving the country.

Tumaglian is the estranged brother of tycoon Lucio Tan.

"It is imperative that a hold departure order be issued directing the commissioner of the Bureau of Immigration to prevent the accused from leaving the country during the pendency of the instant case," the assistant city prosecutor said.

Bumedien filed the motion on Jan. 12 or after the 10 criminal cases were filed in Gloria's court.

RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL CONDOMINIUM UNITS FOR RENT OR SALE

How can I post a shoutout or send a message quickly and easily?

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, January 30, 2010
4th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: 2 S 12: 1-7a, 10-17
Gospel: Mk 4:35-41

On that same day when evening had come, Jesus said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." So they left the crowd and took him along in the boat for he had been sitting in, and other boats set out with him. Then a great gathered and it began to blow a gale. The waves spilled over into the boat so that it was now filled with water. And Jesus was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. They woke him up and said, "Master, don't you care if we sink?" So Jesus awoke, he rebuked the wind and ordered the sea, "Quiet now! Be still!" The wind dropped and there was a great calm. Then Jesus said to them, "Why are you so frightened? Do you still have no faith?" But they were terrified and they said to one another, "Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

Commentary

Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow.

There is no more to life.
Tomorrow's ought the wisdom of the sea.
Hindsight is not
to not without it.
not there to save us
from [illegible].

Field tests expose weaknesses of poll machines

From page A1

Tuppig said they were afraid the vote could be tampered with should election inspectors fail to transmit the results right after polls close at 6 p.m. on May 13.

"What assurance do we have that the networks won't log down on election day?" asked Mihahar Sulaipan, after technician, using three different SIM cards, took almost an hour to install the results.

Simultaneous tests were also held at the Tupig Elementary School and Apalo Elementary School in Pateros.

24-hour period

Commission on Elections Spokesperson James Jimenez said the technical difficulties did not mean that the elections are doomed.

He noted that the tests were aimed at exposing the weaknesses of the system so that they would be addressed.

At the Tupig City Hall where the transmitted votes from Makati's wards were received, Comelec official Celia Romero said that a delay in the transmission of results does not necessarily mean that there is cyberfraud.

She said the Comelec has allotted some 36 hours for the transmission of returns from the precincts to the municipal level.

"We estimate the transmission time to be around two minutes, but in case there are delays, the 36-hour period would be sufficient to remedy the issue," explained Romero, a member of the Comelec project management office which oversees the deployment.

He noted that from time to time text messages get delayed "but most still get the message."

She also said that aside from three SIM cards which will be issued to vendors, a broadband satellite connection and a high-speed internet line are always standby.

Signal problems

Meanwhile, Dennela, Comelec director for the National Capital Region, said the first PCOS, which will be used to record and count the votes, encountered some problems during the transmission stage as the results could not be transmitted after several attempts.

"We encountered problems in terms of signal, but eventually it was all transmitted," Dennela told a press briefing.

The three machines in the Makatiha and Tupig elementary schools were able to sync, and the results via GSM—the network used by cell phone providers—after Comelec officials changed the SIM cards.

The troubleshooting in the three instances lasted about 45 minutes and it took technicians three SIMs to get the signal for transmission, Dennela said.

In the Apalo Elementary School, the problems with transmission persisted even after the SIM cards were replaced.

In the end, the technicians had to resort to the Broadband Global Area Network satellite transmission to send the data to the canvassing center at the Pateros Municipal Hall.

Two machines, one in the Apalo school, reported four out of 16 ballots. Dennela said the machines may have rejected the ballots because they were overplied during the first field test last Wednesday.

Mock poll Feb. 6

Comelec Commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal and Sir Guiamo and Smartmatic-TIM, the technology provider implementing the country's first-ever electronic balloting, are scheduled the post-bans pronounced in the testing and transmission of ballots.

But that the machines were able to send the votes successfully to the canvassing centers showed that the system was working, Larrazabal said.

Larrazabal noted that the Comelec is taking note of the technical and procedural glitches during the tests to ensure that these will not be repeated on election day.

"There are some things we observe today that will help us in the conduct of elections," he said.

"We are going to do another test, a more comprehensive one, which is the mock elections on Feb. 6," he said.

Questions from residents

Some 20 residents, including barangay officials, participated in yesterday's field test demonstrations, answering questions as Smartmatic-TIM technicians.

Dennela said the tests have answered the Comelec that their decision to hold the mock polls

Saved from gallows, 2 RP maids return

By Jerry E. Esplanada

TWO FILIPINO HOUSE MAIDS from the death sentences in Saudi Arabia through the "personal intervention" of President Macapagal-Arroyo, have returned to the country, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Mari Tejano and Marjorie Salitan arrived yesterday afternoon from Riyadh. They were accompanied by Ambassador Antonio Villamor, the country's ambassador to the Middle East kingdom.

Upon their arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Tejano and Salitan proceeded to the DFA in Pasay City to call on foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo.

Tejano and Salitan, natives of Batangas and Iloilo, respectively, had served a total of eight years and seven months in a Saudi jail.

They were earlier charged with robbery and homicide for the death of the former's then employer in May 2001.

Three years later, the Jeddah General Shari'ah Court sentenced them to death by hanging, which was later affirmed by the Saudi Supreme Judicial Council.

In July 2005, the President sent the first of several appeals to Saudi King Abdullah, requesting for clemency from the Arab leader.

Sometime in 2007, a second letter from Ms Arroyo was hand-carried by Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis to the director-general of the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Shortly afterwards, the Jeddah Grand Court lessened the sentence of the two Filipinos to 12 years imprisonment and 1,200 lashes.

During her visit to Saudi Arabia on Sept. 23, 2009 for the inauguration of the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, the President handed a personal note to King Abdullah where she reiterated her request for clemency and immediate repatriation of Tejano and Salitan.

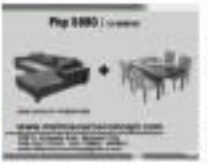
After follow-up meetings with officials of the Saudi foreign ministry, Villamor was informed by the Saudi government about the release of the two convicts.

Meanwhile, the Philippine embassy in Riyadh said the counselors in Jeddah have intimated a "list containing all Filipinos in Saudi jails for consideration to the royal pardon," according to the DFA.

The pardon would cover "those who are detained or sentenced to jail terms for petty crimes and those who have made restitution to their victims."

At least nine Filipinos have been pardoned and released by Saudi authorities under the same royal decree, said the DFA.

BACK HOME. Mari Tejano and Marjorie Salitan arrive after they were spared from Saudi gallows. EDGAR SALIDO



Ombudsman has losing record vs graft

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN lost the majority of the cases the anti-graft court Sandiganbayan resolved last year, with 180 of the 317 resolved cases ending in either dismissal or acquittal.

In an annual report this week, the Sandiganbayan said that it resolved 317 cases in 2009, lower than the 341 cases its five divisions managed to resolve in 2008.

The same report showed that of all the cases the anti-graft court resolved last year, all respondents in at least 109 cases were acquitted of the charges. The Sandiganbayan cited dismissed 41 cases while 11 others were either dismissed after trial.

Six cases resulted in the outright dismissal of the charges against some respondents and in the dismissal after trial of the charges against the remaining accused, while five cases resulted in the acquittal of some respondents and in the dismissal of the charges of their co-accused, the report added.

The same report showed that the Office of the Ombudsman withdrew 66 of the cases it had filed while 24 other cases ended in some of the respondents being acquitted of the charges and the others having the charges against them either dismissed or archived.

Thus, only 35 cases resulted in the conviction of all accused, while in 15 other cases, the respondents pleaded guilty of the charges.

Fifteen cases resulted in the conviction of some of the accused, acquittal of the others and/or the dismissal of the charges against the remaining respondents, the report added.

Amid Senate turmoil, where's Ping Lacson?

By Michael Lim Ubac

ALL-IN FARES AT
EXCEPTIONAL VALUE
SINGAPORE
FROM USD 188
RETURN
KUALA LUMPUR 208
PERTH 536
MELBOURNE / SYDNEY 669
MUNICH 958
FOR MORE GREAT DEALS, VISIT
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INTRIGUE ENSUES!

Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, who blew the whistle on the alleged P366-million additional funding in the 2008 national budget for the C-5 road link project, is nowhere to be found.

Lacson has made himself scarce since the Christmas holidays, but for reasons that apparently have nothing to do with the C-5 issue in which Sen. Manuel Villar is currently embroiled.

In 2008, Lacson triggered the Senate ethics inquiry that has since caused many headaches for Villar, standard bearer of the Nacionalista Party in the 2010 polls.

Enter the Bolics, Lacson's media affinity—Antonio Jalbuena and the Inquirer yesterday that his boss was busy preparing for his legal defense in the double murder case of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito.

The murders occurred almost 10 years ago, but Lacson was implicated as an accused in the case only on Jan. 6, prompting many in the Senate to ask whether this move had anything to do with Malacañang's game plan for the May 10 elections.

Dacer and Corbito were abducted by armed men at the corner of Edsa Boni (Main and South Super Highway at the boundary of Manila and Makati) on June 20, 2000. The two were later brought to Indang, Cavite, where they were reportedly killed and their bodies burned.

Lacson protégé

Former Senior Supt. Cesar Mancao, Lacson's ex-protégé, claimed in an affidavit that he was present when Lacson gave the order to then Insp. Supt. Michael Ray Aquino to kill Dacer, whose codename was "Tatay."

Lacson has denied he had a hand in the killings, saying his belated inclusion into the case was politically motivated.

Belor said the senator was regularly meeting with his lawyers in preparation for the hearing on Feb. 15.

Lacson had went in the Senate in December when he parried with Senate reporters.

He personally lauded satellite his statute letter to Senate president Juan Ponce Enrile sometime this month, and has not been seen during sessions, which resumed on Jan. 18.

The majority bloc is unsure whether Lacson can attend the crucial voting next week on the adoption of the Senate Committee of the Whole's report, which finds Villar culpably liable for the C-5 controversy.

Sr. Belor said he was not privy to Lacson's schedule.

Lacson's presence on the floor of the Senate is crucial for the group of senators led by Enrile, author of Commerce Report No. 7388 on the Villar-led case against Villar.

To adopt the report, the 23-member upper chamber needs to muster a simple majority (50 percent plus 1), but Sen. Joker Arroyo and Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago have insisted that a two-thirds vote, or 16 senators, are needed to adopt the report.

The latest count by the Inquirer showed that both minority and majority blocs were on equal footing at 11-11.

Also up for adoption is Senate Resolution No. 1472, which was prepared by Villar's allies to scuttle the committee report. The resolution cleared Villar of the charges.

Senate debate

Opposition Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano said the public should expect the Senate debates on the C-5 mess to drag on until session closes next week for the election campaign.

"It is doubtful that they can defend the report before the members for the vote," said Cayetano. "My are confident that we can show the truth, which is that there is no overprice, no double insertion, no road diversion or rerouting. The report is incredibly rehearsed and is not supported by fact nor evidence," he added.

On Sept. 15, 2008, Lacson delivered a privilege speech in the Senate on the questionable funding for the C-5 extension road from Las Piñas to Parañaque.

But Villar said there were no double insertion and diversion issues there are actually two roads, so the first P366-million entry was intended for the C-5 extension and the second P598-million entry for the construction of a flyover from Sucat Road to Manila Coastal Road.

The Senate finance committee, then chaired by Enrile, later found that there was no double insertion, and that the project actually cost P1.2 billion, still meaning almost P2 billion to complete the project.

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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

Only 1 Luzon dam ready for El Niño

CABANATUAN CITY—OF FOUR MAJOR DAMS in Luzon, the one in Pantabangan is meeting the challenge of mitigating the effects of the El Niño phenomenon.

When last monitored on Thursday, the Pantabangan Dam had 1.33 meters of water to spare for continuous irrigation of 102,558 hectares of rice land in the province.

A monitoring report made by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) said among Luzon dams Pantabangan's water level was 213.60 meters.

Its operating rule curve, or the level in which it can still assure the needs of continuously providing irrigation water to its geographical service area, is 210.87 meters.

NIA administrator Carlos Salazar said Magat Dam in Isabela is now negative 17.3 meters from its rule curve; San Roque Dam in Pangasinan, negative 7.68 meters; and Angat Dam in Bulacan, negative 8.39 meters.

The water levels of the three dams, Salazar reported, are Magat, 173.5 meters; San Roque, 260.39 meters; and Angat, 201.31 meters.

Sufficient water

Antonio Nangel, operations manager of the Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation System (UPRIIS), said water supply in the Pantabangan Dam, which was judiciously managed during the onslaught of three storms last year, even triggered the increase of its area coverage this cropping season.

From 99,000 hectares last year, it was increased to 102,550 hectares this season, he said.

"We have also programmed an additional service area of 25,000 hectares for our Quick Turn-Around schedule," Nangel said. The QTA is the third planting a year after the main and dry-season cropping.

Water allocation in the Pantabangan Dam's reservoir is helped by water coming from two rivers of Nueva Vizcaya via a 26-km tunnel.

The diversion of part of water from the Nueva Vizcaya river is the main feature of the Casecnan Multipurpose Irrigation and Power Project (CMIPP).

THE SPILLWAY of Magat Dam, one of Luzon's four dams, is starting to dry up because of lack of water. ALVIN KASIBANG

Crop-loss projection

As many as 16,000 hectares of the area reached by irrigation by the CMIPP have yet to be provided with irrigation canals, the excess water is diverted to other areas in the province, it was learned.

The agriculture department reported that about P20 billion in expected crop harvests may be lost this year because of the drought to be caused by the El Niño phenomenon.

Cloud seeding, in addition to other measures, has been ordered by the Department of Agriculture to cope with the impact of the dry spell.

The effects of El Niño are starting to be felt in Region Dr, colonial where 55.5 hectares of farms are drying up, according to the provincial agriculturist.

Forest cover key

Ignacito Tablazon, Negros Occidental agriculturist, said most farms that are feeling the effects of El Niño are planted to corn. At least 12 hectares of these are corn fields in Murcia town.

The entire province of Negros Occidental would be hit by the dry spell but southern Negros Occidental would suffer most because of the lack of forest cover in the area, Tablazon said.

Areas stretching from Bacolod City to Victorias City would suffer less because of the still existing forest cover in northern Negros, he added.

Tablazon said the provincial government has scheduled cloud seeding operations on Monday. Assistant Negros Inquirer Central Luzon and Cagayan Valley Correspondents

1 convicted, 4 cleared of '03 Davao bomb attack

DAVAO CITY—ONE WAS CONvicted, while four were cleared, of killing 13 people in a terror attack here in 2003.

Judge Benjie Rapsing, of Regional Trial Court Branch 12, sentenced Tom Ahmad, a resident of Kabacanan, Magsaysay, to life imprisonment for the April 2, 2003, bombing of the Sasa Wharf that killed more than a dozen people and injured scores of others.

The judge said Ahmad is not eligible for parole.

Rapsing said the court found Ahmad "guilty beyond reasonable doubt as principal by direct participation of the complex crime of multiple murder with frustrated murder" in the Sasa explosion.

Full guy

Jane Catalbang, Ahmad's counsel, said he will elevate the case to the Court of Appeals.

Ordered released were Ahmad's cousin Ustap Hasmadiaghan of Catalunan City; Tahamad Yusop Dagancheng of Kabacanan; and Ting Idlot and Jimmy Bulalan, both residents of Piknag, Magsaysay town. Bulalan was only 17 years old when he was arrested after the blast.

Amirah Ali Lidasan, national president of the Bantu Bangsamoro, said her group was dismayed at the decision, calling Ahmad a "full guy."

Lidasan, speaking outside of an investigation by the Mindanao Truth Commission (MTC), said the 2003 bombing was the work of government forces.

The MTC was an interfaith and multisectoral group created to investigate bombings in Mindanao.

In its report, it accused then defense secretary Angelo Reyes and former military intelligence chief Victor Corpus of being behind the bombings. Reyes and Corpus denied the allegations.

Scenarios

Lawyer Beverly Soliz-Akmad, convenor of MTC, said bombings in Davao and other areas in Mindanao were "scenarios conjured up by officials of the Arroyo administration."

It is interesting that these bombings have always occurred at around the same time that the government was trying to justify the presence of US military forces in the country," Mamo said reporters following the release of the report.

Lidasan said her group stood by the findings of the MTC.

In sentencing Ahmad, Dagnican also ordered him to pay damages to the families of the victims of the blast. Jeffrey M. Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao

No recorded message this time: Villar meets OFW kin

IMUS CITY—A PRESIDENTIAL candidate has met with siblings of a Filipino maid awaiting execution in Kuwait.

Sen. Manuel Villar, standard-bearer of the Nacionalista Party met with brothers of Jakaria Pasoa, who is in death row in Kuwait after that country's high court affirmed his sentence for the alleged murder of her employer's daughter.

Villar met with the Pasoa brothers, led by Ato Hoss Mid. Ingarin Pasoa, after a report came out that the Pasoa family has been calling Villar's OFW Helpline but ended up frustrated because only a recorded message answers the phone.

A staffer of Villar, who went with the Pasoa brothers to the Imusnet office on Thursday, said the Pasoa family was calling a number that was assigned to take messages.

A press release from Villar's office quoted Maj. Pasoa as saying there was a mix-up in announcements made by members of the Pasoa family.

A younger brother of Maj. Pasoa, Hilkis, had said the latter by called the Villar help line three times, but seven months told to leave a message by a recorded voice.

At the meeting with Villar, the press release said Maj. Pasoa was informed that Villar had already coordinated with the Department of Foreign Affairs to help Jakaria.

Lorna Pineda, head of Villar's help line OFW group, however said never in past 111 pms. on Jan. 21. "He was our 48th caller that day," said Pineda. Julie G. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

VILLAGE LINK
Residents of Barangay Daruyan in Leon, Iloilo, use this hanging bridge as their main link to the town proper. ALVIN KASIBANG

Church exec: East Visayas needs jobs, not STL

By Joey Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—BISHOP PROpounds and jobs, instead of gambling, to thrive in Visayas.

A ranking Church official in Biliran, Leyte, made this statement following reports that the operation Small Town Lottery (STL) will soon operate in the region.

"Instead of pushing the numbers game, officials should instead come up with programs and projects that will generate employment and income for the poor people," said Fr. Amadeo Alvero, spokesperson of the Archdiocese of Palo.

Alvero said in a text message on Friday that STL would make the poor people poorer and the few rich richer.

"Small town lottery is just a form of endorsement," said Alvero.

"It would just enslave the people of Leyte, specially the poor, into risking their hard money for a game of chance, believing that someday they will win," he said.

Instead of enticing people in her to STL, Alvero said government officials should, instead, encourage Leyteños and other Filipinos to work hard to earn money.

"We should rather teach people to use their money properly than to squander them on something that is uncertain," he said.

Earlier, the regional office of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office confirmed plans to introduce STL to the region. Leyte was chosen as site for STL's test run.

In storm-stricken school, books are gone

BAY, LAGUNA—THE FLOOD has receded but its lingering effects are being felt in a small elementary school in a village here.

"The last most of our books, our science equipment and three of our classrooms," said Dionisia Bonachita, principal of the public school named after its village, San Ramona.

The school had at least 600 books. Most were destroyed in the floods.

In September, Tropical Storm "Ondoy" dumped a record amount of rain on Metro Manila and Laguna and left floods that lingered for more than three months in this and other lakeshore towns.

The flood, which was three days in one instances, submerged piles of books that pupils left in classrooms.

> "We lost most of our books, our science equipment and three of our classrooms..."

"It was an unfortunate because done before the typhoon, we had ramping activities so we asked the students to submit the books and leave them there," Bonachita said yesterday.

She said students stored books, which they leave in their teachers after each class for the next time to use.

"There were only a very few books saved, mostly the teachers' copies which they took home with them," Bonachita said.

"When classes resumed, we just had those books photocopied for the pupils to work on," she added.

She said teachers would follow lesson guides in giving lectures while students answer on photocopied workbooks.

The school had a student population of 600 from Grades 1-6 and 89 pupils in kindergarten.

Gladiola Pacencia, Grade 6 lecture teacher, said her class also lost equipment like net token, CDs and the school's only typewriter.

Plywood that served as classroom dividers burned too. Three classrooms were doomed inside and closed, forcing students to turn the library, canteen and clinic into classrooms.

Teacher Carmen Capuzi said classes had to be extended by an hour because of the disruption brought by the typhoon. Marlowe Cinco, Inquirer Southern Luzon

CELEBRITY COOKS
Two of the most easily identifiable women in the Sorsy Surgy Tagbo—Sen. Loren Legarda and Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia—appear to be cooking something amid a frenzy of activities in the festival initiated by the Cebu provincial government.

INQUIRER Visayas

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Rice decline challenges DA officials

By Vicente Calixto
Roxas City

AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS have vowed to double their efforts to reverse low palay productivity in Eastern Visayas late next year and to prepare for any effects of climate change on crops, particularly rice.

After posting positive growth for five consecutive years, rice production in the region suddenly dropped by 6.9 percent in 2009.

"The challenge is to reverse the trend," says Leo Cañeda, regional executive director of the Department of Agriculture.

Rice production had been increasing from 263,899 metric tons (MT) in 2001 to 780,000 MT in 2005. It first surpassed the million mark at 1.03 million MT in 2008, but it slid to only 952,008 MT in 2009.

A RICE field in Eastern Visayas

Eastern Visayas experienced several typhoons and floods three to four months of below normal rainfall.

"The challenge on us is to provide climate ready or mitigating seeds to our farmers," Cañeda says.

The DA's 20 demonstration farms in the region are now showcasing "submergence-tolerant, drought-resistant and saline-resistant" seed varieties.

Every year, 16,700 hectares of rice fields are flooded in Eastern Visayas. The use of submergence-tolerant rice varieties, which can survive up to two weeks under water, would cut production and income losses of farmers, according to rice experts.

Confluence of factors

Cañeda attributed the decline to a confluence of factors, including "the deleterious effects of the not so favorable weather condition."

Eastern Visayas experienced several typhoons and floods during the first nine months of 2009 that destroyed ready-to-harvest palay.

Pest infestation was also blamed for the low palay production.

The DA continued last year to implement the "seed to consumer" to increase palay productivity such as providing quality seeds and other farm inputs, and infrastructure facilities to the farmers, Cañeda maintains.

It encouraged the farmers to adopt economic technology and the Quick-Turnaround (QTA) planting scheme to reduce palay losses. Rice ratooning technology regenerates the growth of tillers after harvest, while the QTA promotes a new crop to plant immediately after rice harvest.

Unfortunately, these were not enough to increase production.

Cañeda says the 6.9 percent drop must be reversed and at least a 5 percent growth must be realized this year.

"We need to intensify the implementation of the PRIDE program, we need to establish greater rapport with our partner LGUs (local government units), especially in the provision of counterpart funding," he says.

PRIDE stands for Fertilizers, Irrigation and other rural infrastructure, such as farm-to-market roads (FMRs), Extension services and education for farmers, Loans, Dryers and other post-harvest facilities, and Seeds and other genetic materials.

Garbisi, the DA but announced that it would continue its programs this year as part of government efforts to enable the agriculture and fisheries sectors to cope with climate change and the challenge of a global free trade.

Cañeda says the entire agriculture sector in Eastern Visayas ended on a positive note for 2009.

With a national growth rate of 1.5 percent for the sector, Eastern Visayas managed to attain a 6.1-percent growth in 2009, he reveals.

"We're seeing some growth in the livestock and poultry and the fishing sectors because Region 8 is also identified as a fish-rich region. So, we have to build a growth momentum that we have established in the fisheries sub-sector," he says.

In the region alone, fisheries contributed 25-30 percent of the total growth rules-added to agriculture, he added.

Cañeda says his department is also preparing for possible bad effects of climate change.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) has warned that Northern Samar and Catanduanes may experience a dry spell after

Doc gives back to Iloilo's poor

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Sta. Barbara, Iloilo

FILIPINO-American volunteers repack medicines for a mission. CARLOS ESPAÑOL

FOR THE third straight year, Dr. Donna Dizenzo joined a medical mission to the Philippines and she said she would probably come back every year.

Dizenzo, an American obstetrician-gynecologist from the Kaiser Permanente medical facility in California, is among the 71 Americans and Filipino-Americans doctors, nurses and other medical practitioners who joined a three-day medical mission at the Pfizer's Visayas Headquarters in Sta. Barbara, Iloilo, 15 kilometers northeast of Iloilo City.

"It's so rewarding to be part of this mission and I would like to come back every year," Dizenzo told the INQUIRER.

The mission joined by medical practitioners from the University of Santo Tomas and Mile Peninsula Medical Center came upon the invitation of Iloilo Rep. Judy Syjuco and Augusto Syjuco, director general of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority with the support of the non-profit organization Medshare and the ABC's for Global Health, and Dr. Julieta Gabo, founder of ABC's for Global Health and associate professor at Stanford University.

Gabido said two-thirds of the 70 volunteers were Filipino-Americans and included 15 doctors, 20 nurses and other support staff including optometrists, dentists and pharmacists.

While Medshare and ABC's for Global Health shouldered the transportation of equipment and medicines donated by pharmaceutical companies, the volunteers paid for their travel expenses and part of their accommodations.

The team includes doctors specializing in internal medicine, general surgery, obstetrics-gynecology, eye surgery, pediatrics and eye diseases.

Gabido said they targeted administering medical services to around 5,000 outpatients and perform 200 surgeries, 800 dental examinations and treatments and provide 750 eyeglasses to patients. Local doctors and nurses were assisting the medical mission.

The members of the team said helping the poor residents in Iloilo and in other parts of the Philippines has been fulfilling.

Married to Filipino physician Robert Dizon, Dizenzo had long wanted to come to the Philippines upon the persuading of her father-in-law. But she was able to join a mission only in 2008.

She said the last kept on coming back because of the friendship and the expression of gratitude of Filipinos.

"The people who have nothing will give you the last thing they have because they're so generous and appreciative," she said.

Dizenzo said she considered herself to be fortunate to have medical skills and wanted to give something back to those who urgently need her services.

One case she remembers was of a woman during a mission in Bayombong in Nueva Vizcaya who was suffering from uterine bleeding.

"Her daughter was a nurse working at the hospital but she could not get treatment for her mother because they had no money. But we were able to help her," Dizenzo said.

Gabido's daughter Michaela Flanagan, 22, who was born and grew up in the United States, said joining the medical mission has also given her the opportunity to know and understand better her mother's country and culture.

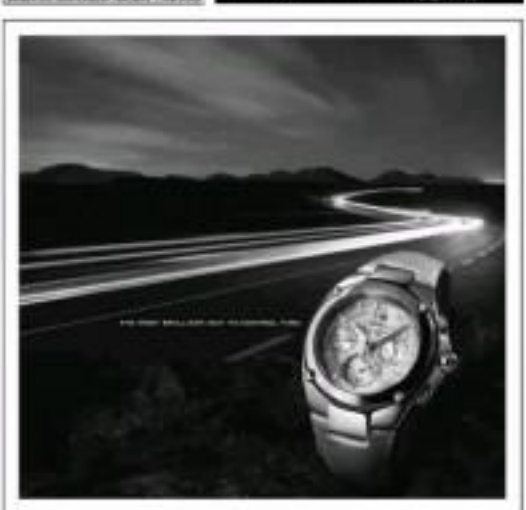
"I wasn't able to see this side of the Philippines and it was hard at first because my mother is from here but it has been very rewarding to help people," Flanagan said.

A bioethics student at the College of San Mateo in California, she helps in the pharmacy team of the mission and also provides tips to patients on proper nutrition and lifestyle changes to prevent diseases.

"Many of the diseases we encountered are preventable but some people could not get adequate medical care even just getting vitamins for children," she said.

Flanagan said among the hardest part of the mission was hearing and seeing people they were not able to help.

It her third medical mission and the first time to come to Iloilo, she said she would continue to volunteer as long as she could.



ISSN 0116-2642 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Vol. 29 No. 19

OPINION

Email: letters@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/opinion

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On the spot

THE DECLARATION MADE BY JUSTICE ANTONIO Carpio that he welcomed being considered by the Judicial and Bar Council for nomination as next chief justice of the Supreme Court but would only accept an appointment made by President Macapagal-Arroyo's successor has put Justice Renato Corona on the spot. If Corona follows Carpio's example, he can put an end to the raging debate concerning the power of the incumbent President to make the appointment and thus help preserve the credibility of the Court. If he doesn't and he accepts the appointment, he risks possible rejection by his colleagues, public ridicule as the President's puppet, and even impeachment by the next Congress.

EDITORIAL

In a letter to the JBC, dated Jan. 26, 2013, Carpio, the most senior justice, expressed interest in being considered for the position to be vacated by Chief Justice Reynato Puno on May 17. But he said this "on the understanding" that the list of nominees would be submitted only to the next president.

This condition was the same as the one laid down earlier by Justice Conchita Carpio Morales, who is third among the justices in terms of seniority. To explain why she was making that condition, Morales cited Article 7, Sec. 15 of the Constitution which says: "Two months immediately before the next presidential election and up to the end of his or her term, a President or Acting President shall not make appointments, except temporary appointments to executive positions ..."

Malacañang and some legal experts have said the prohibition against "midnight appointments" does not cover the position of chief justice. On the contrary, they say, the President is duty-bound to make the appointment since another constitutional provision requires her to appoint a chief justice within 90 days after the position becomes vacant. But administration critics and other legal experts say the prohibition covers all positions, except for those spelled out in the Constitution, and the next president who will be elected on May 10 will have 45 days to make the appointment.

The JBC has said that by "policy and practice" it limits the candidates for nomination to the five most senior justices. The fourth and fifth senior justices are Presbitero Velasco Jr. and Eduardo Nachura, respectively. Both have requested that their names be stricken off the list of possible nominees, with Nachura saying he was doing so in deference to his more senior colleagues. Thus, if it were to follow its own selection policy, the JBC would be left with two nominees who will not accept an appointment made by President Arroyo (Carpio and Morales) and one who may or may not accept it (Corona).

Corona, who is widely believed to be the President's preference, now has the choice of seizing a singular opportunity to realize every lawyer's grand ambition or joining Carpio and Morales and thus cheapening the President. If he sets the condition that the next president should make the appointment, the JBC will have no list of nominees to submit to the President. Of course, there's the view that she could appoint just about any lawyer as chief justice, but would she dare go this far?

With his rivals taking themselves out of the contest, the way has been paved for Corona to rise to the top. It is an opportunity that would be difficult to resist. Carpio is 68 and Corona is 63. If Corona lets this chance go by, he could be kissing his dream of becoming chief justice goodbye.

But Carpio doesn't have a lock on the position. Nobody even knows who will be the next president and whose he will favor. Corona should just take his chances with the next administration and rely on his record to win him the new president's nod.

To force the issue could be disastrous for the Court and for him. To the public, it would not be a Corona Court but an Arroyo Court, led by a loyalist and packed with loyalists. And his tenure could be rudely cut short. The same legal experts who say the President has no power to appoint the next chief justice also warn that her appointee would be equally guilty of violating the Constitution and so he could be impeached. That would be an inglorious ending to a hastard appointment.

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A preventable massacre

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

HE WILL ONLY ATTEST(?) TO THE BOTCH? for violence of the lamparans—and surely had no intention of putting the latter's political allies in a bad light, certainly not the administration presidential aspirant, Silbert Teodoro, with whom he is now aligned. But the testimony the other day of Bulacan Vice Mayor Ismael "Toto" Mangudadatu at the bail petition of Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan Jr., the principal suspect in the Nov. 23 massacre, continued enough intriguing information to bring out the admiral-sized's resurrected defenders. Indeed, the glimmer that emerged from Mangudadatu's testimony provides sufficient reason to ask whether President Macapagal-Arroyo's party should not be held accountable for the consequences of the Ampatuans' abusive rule in Maguindanao.

I do not mean legally liable, although that can not be entirely discounted. I mean politically answerable. The voters of this country have every right to demand of Ms Arroyo and her party that they explain why in the last nine years, despite what they knew of them—their supported and befriended the Ampatuans, actively courted their favor, rewarded them with extraordinary amounts of public resources, and generally turned a blind eye to reports of their extrajudicial abuses.

I draw from the Inquirer report (1/26/13): Vice Mayor Mangudadatu testified that on Oct. 31 last year, he was summoned to a meeting with the ruling Lakas-Kampi-CMD party vice-standard bearer Gilbert Teodoro at Café Adriatico in Manila. He says that Teodoro warned him about running as Maguindanao governor against Ampatuan Jr. Teodoro supposedly told him: "Boss! I can't be just nice, Toto. You know those people are not to be trifled with."

Shortly before the massacre, the same message was conveyed to him, he said, by another party official, former Rep. Pangarungan Bishop Simeon Datumanong, who urged him to withdraw his candidacy in favor of Ampatuan Jr. Toto Mangudadatu refused. On the morning of Nov. 23 and Aug. 31, he was asked by presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio to come to "consultancy" meetings with Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan Jr. to discuss meetings, he was again demanded from challenging the political supremacy of the Ampatuans. He said that as early as July 9, 2009, he and his cousin, Sultan Kudarat Gov. Suharto Mangudadatu, also met personally with Ms Arroyo to ask for her help in recounting the ballots of the police forces of Datukan town, where his brother was mayor. He told the President that the Ampatuans were denied by government forces on orders of Governor Ampatuan Sr. He said the President called Armed Forces Chief Gen. Victor Ibrado to order the release of the guns.

What this testimony succeeds to document is the lamparans' reputation for violence. But almost like an annoying audience that keeps calling attention to itself, it is the surrounding political cloud of the Ampatuan clan that stands out here. Everyone in the highest echelons of government seems to be aware of the clan's reputation for violence. One wonders if Ms Arroyo and the leaders of Lakas were at all surprised when the Nov. 23 massacre happened. Perhaps only press Mr Lourdes Ejercito, erstwhile presidential spokesperson, was clueless about the political implications of this tragedy. When the lamparans were tagged as the principal suspects in the gruesome crime, she found herself undermining their friendship with the President, naively adding that this relationship is not sound by the fact that they stand accused of a crime. She lost her job the following day.

The more astute players however immediately kept their distance. Teodoro rushed to Maguindanao to embrace Toto Mangudadatu in sympathy and forthwith demanded the resignation of the lamparans from the party. Ms Arroyo herself chose to remain silent, after sending a prepared statement expressing horror over the incident and condoling with the families of the victims.

But considering the promised political fallout from Mangudadatu's recent statements in court, party leaders have been quick to react. Cabinet Secretary Silvestre Bello III, who is running for senator, said on radio: "It is not right to blame the President. The President had nothing to do with the gun ban order that started from both parties. The violence in Maguindanao was caused by a feud between two families, some of whose members are related to each other."

True, the initial attempts to explain the Ampuero killings enlivened in the tradition of Mindanao rido, or vendetta, which accounts failed to consider the fact that the Ampuanas and the Mangudadatus were related to one another by marriage and were in fact political allies until recently. In short, the massacre was not an episode in a vicious cycle of family feuds. It appears that their simply could not agree on a fair distribution of the spoils of political power. The lamparans had enjoyed a special dominion with Ms Arroyo, and this made them just too powerful to be challenged by another local political group.

Local watchdogs has its own natural bounds. "They are believed by limited access to arms and equally limited control of economic means. But in the spaces of the modern state—which assures a monopoly of the means of coercion and open up access to economic resources, warlords should rather away that so, apparently, in the world of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, where, in exchange for modern weapons and access to public funds, they have carved out a new role as the national elites' technicians of violence and enforcers of electoral fraud.

No, we cannot infer Ms Arroyo for the Nov. 23 massacre. But we can hold her responsible for making it possible.

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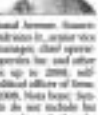
Manny Villar blameless?



GET REAL

Isidro Cuñar Montinola

PERHAPS THE ULTIMATE IN DECLARING A MORATORIUM on the discussion of the ethics case against Sen. Manny Villar, here are some incontrovertible facts, presented in Q & A form. The sources of the information is also given.

Question: What roadway projects are the subject matters of the Villar ethics case anomaly?

Answer: 1. The Manila Cavite Toll Expressway Project (MCTEP), the original C-5 south extension project, linking SLEX with the Coastal Road; 2. the DPWH C-5 Extension project (C5E), which supplies with S. Dr. Los Pilias-Pamplanga Link Project (LPPLP), also links SLEX with the Coastal Road. Source: Senate Report (SR) 786.

Q: Is the C5-S/LPPLP project a realignment, as Sen. Jamby Madrigal describes it, or has there been no realignment, as Senator Villar's allies insist? A: Technically, there has been no realignment, because there are two separate roads linking C-5 from SLEX to the Coastal Road. But they are very close together and, in some areas, overlap, as can be ascertained from a side map. Source: Interactive map available at www.gmanews.tv.

Q: Are there any differences between the MCTEP and the C5-S/PPLP? A: Yes. 1. The MCTEP is a joint-venture project between the government and a private Malaysian partner, with the government's financial exposure limited to P1.08 billion for the purchase of the road right-of-way. The private partner is responsible for the construction of the project, for which tolls will be charged. The C5-S/PPLP is a toll-free, wholly-financed government project costing P9.86 billion; 2. The C5-S/LPPLP is longer than the MCTEP in some length comparably connecting the LPPLP portion; 3. The C5-S/LPPLP passes through more Villar properties than the MCTEP. Source: DPWH's per documents cited as Exhibits A, B and TTTT in SR 786; site map from www.gmanews.tv.

Q: Have large are the Villar-company land holdings in the immediate vicinity of the open-limited road projects? A: At least 50-52 hectares; 40 hectares in the vicinity of the LPPLP; 10-12 hectares in the area between Daang Hari and Molino Boulevard (Evangelista Road). Source: Senate Report (SR) 786.

Q: Were the Villar properties bought for road right-of-way (ROW) acquisitions? A: Of the two, the affirmative. P68 1472 (the resolution signed by Villar and his allies exonerating him from all charges) argues for the negative. This on Road and Multinational Avenue. Source: testimony of senatorial witnesses in senate vice president and general manager, chief operating officer of Ayala's Properties Inc. and other Villar-owned companies up to 2008, self-styled consultant and political officer of Erap, ter Villar since August 2008. Note here: Senate's complacency records do not include his name. Note further: it is not clear whether the 50-52 hectares mentioned above include the entire land in SR 786—roughly 18 hectares in area—to be developed by Villar companies in joint venture with three owners.

Q: What is the involvement of Villar in C5-S and LPPLP? A: 1. The Project Feasibility Study of the DPWH for C5-S states: "The conceptual nature of and the initial release of funds for the C5-S Project was initiated by Sen. Manuel Villar, whose same efforts also paved the way for the funding of the Las Piñas-Parañaque Link Road (LPPLP)"; 2. Various interviews and announcements (Private Development Businessmen, Villar and park hotel); in the national government budget over the years 2002-2008 for C5-S and LPPLP; 3. Adriano (cited above), in the office of and presence of Villar, declaring in the director general of the Senate's Legislative Budget Research and Monitoring Office: 4. JAIME'S Villar's personal assistance to the 2008 budget, including a P400-million appropriation for the C5-S. Source: documents submitted by DPWH, lawyer Yolanda Ordóñez of the GSIS, testimony of Ruth Dobbin and Adriano, cited in SR 786.

Q: Were the Villar properties bought for road right-of-way acquisitions? A: Of the two, the affirmative. P68 1472 (the resolution signed by Villar and his allies exonerating him from all charges) argues for the negative. This

valk for a conclusion of the matter. And to help that along, I have...based on the documented prices and acreage of the lands purchased in connection with the LPPLP—computed the weighted average prices that were paid for the Villar and related properties, and those paid for the non-Villar properties. The results: The Villar-related properties, comprising 33,451 square meters, were bought for P368.1 million. The non-Villar properties, comprising 11,681 square meters, were bought for P22 million. That comes to a weighted average of P7,100 per square meter for Villar's properties, and P1,000 per square meter for the non-Villar properties. That has to be a statistically significant difference.

Given the above facts...which no one can contest, since they are based on official documents...and not on to be seen as the output of assertions...it has to be reasonable conclusion:

1. Since there was already an ongoing project (the MCTEP) linking C-5 to the Coastal Road, it was totally unnecessary to build a second one.

2. Which means that there was a waste of scarce resources instead of using only P1.0 billion of government funds for the first project, the government had to spend an additional P9.9 billion for the second, which practically duplicated the first, except for the additional length and the happily for Senator Villar, to have benefited the properties.

3. This unnecessary, wasteful project was certainly Villar's idea. It is specious to argue that it is a DPWH project. As the DPWH bumbling study comes (in black and white), both the C-5 and the LPPLP were conceived and initially funded by Villar.

4. Villar benefited tremendously from the second project. Certainly, his companies were paid significantly more per square meter for the road right of way (which were mostly bought from Villar). But those gains were insignificant compared to the enormous increase in the values of his real estate holdings in the area...at least 50-52 hectares.

Is he blameless? Is the Pope protestant?

Do surveys make CBCP nervous?

LAST SUNDAY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE 100th General Assembly of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, attended by some 5,000 priests, CBCP president Bishop Nereo S. Odchimar issued a pastoral statement called "A Call for Vigilance and Discernment," drafting with the urgency of political transformation in the pre-election year.

Although the statement dealt with many other issues, such as unlicensed vote counting and electronic violence, its main point, said the bishops, was: "CBCP urges vigilance on the conduct of surveys, too."

Actually, the CBCP statement on surveys appears only in the following lines: "In not be swayed by survey results or political advertisements. Follow the dictates of your conscience after a prayerful and collective period of discernment. Winnability is not to kill a candidate's prestige." The most interesting point that led Inciong's Norman Bordadora to discuss the theme of his report? Just guessing.

Do surveys sway voters? Opinion polling is meant to learn the views of the general public, not to convince those in the minority to conform to the majority's side. Its purpose is to understand voters' not instead to enlist one's vote to the probable votes of one's fellow citizens. Is it what cardinals do in the Sistine Chapel when choosing a new pope.

I think the CBCP need not fear surveys, since in fact these reflect our voters' choices of candidates is almost nil, according to 1865 post-election polls about voter tendencies of, and reactions to, surveys of the campaign period. Overall leading fourth reply that the CBCP wishes that the election winners will not be those currently leading in surveys? Just asking.

What actually sways voters? According to our polls, the most influential are the voters' relatives and friends; but this begs the question of how the said relatives/friends get influenced. Here is where it is necessary to know the reality behind the available for thousands, but not millions, of voters. Not a listening to a candidate speak, preferably on television, and preferably not in a mere advertisement.

IN HER FOREWORD TO THE 2010 EDUCATION For All Global Monitoring Report (EFA GMR), Director-general Irina Bokova said that "rising poverty levels mean that the challenge of meeting basic human needs is a daily struggle. Lacuna beside the past touch us that children are often the first to suffer—as is their chance to go to school."

One of the tools that the EFA-GMR uses to determine a country's progress is the fifth Development Index or EDI. Its indicators are the net enrollment ratio in primary school, survival rate to grade 5, gender parity and equality, and quality. The EDI value for a given country is arrived at via the arithmetic mean of these four goals. An EDI of 1 or 100 percent is the highest achieved.

Let's start with the good news first.

The 2010 EFA GMR finds that the Philippines together with Fiji, Indonesia and Malaysia, is "in an intermediate position with an EDI between 0.80 and 0.94."

And now for the bad news.

The EFA GMR also says that in 2007, 9 million primary school-age children were out of school in the East Asia-Pacific region, mostly from the Philippines (1 million), Indonesia (500,000), Cambodia (200,000) and Lao PDR (100,000).

More alarmingly, around 25 percent of those who do go to school drop out before Grade 5 due to poverty and location, "with the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and some outlying islands falling far behind the national average. The cost of school fees is the biggest factor [for] to cut back on education spending or withdraw their children from school."

Furthermore, in the Philippines, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Burma, 41 percent to 5.4 percent of pupils drop out of the first grade. "In the Philippines, 30 percent of children enrolling in primary school reach the last grade. School location is particularly poor in the Philippines.

Those figures have remained rather constant

No more excuses

COMMENTARY

Butch Hernandez

for the past five years.

What has this led to? A rising number of adult illiterates: over 1.4 million in the Philippines and 1.2 million in Vietnam.

The EFA GMR says that globally, "literacy remains among the most neglected of all education goals, with about 759 million adults lacking literacy skills today. Two-thirds are women." The report adds that "[a]dult literacy is the forgotten school without basing a sound basic skills."

It seems that the Philippines has been a disappointment, because "achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015 should have been a formality given its wealth level and starting point at the dawn of the new century and despite this, without decisive political leadership, the country will miss the goal. Education indicators for the Philippines are below what might be expected for a country at its income level. Extreme poverty and regional disparities are part of the problem, it adds."

Aside from conventional poverty indicators, EFA GMR also looks at "Education Parity," which it defines as "young adults aged 17 to 21 who have fewer than four years of education. They are unlikely to have mastered basic literacy or numeracy skills."

Young adults with fewer than two years of education, who are likely to face extreme disadvantage in many areas of their lives, including health and employment, fall under the "Extreme Education Parity" category.

Despite the progress of the past decade, absolute deprivation in education among 17- to 21-year-olds is extraordinarily high in Cambodia and Myanmar (Burma), and remains significant in Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Vietnam," says the UN report.

Let's now take a look at international assessments such as the TIMSS (Trends in International Math and Science Study) and the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment).

The PISA is given to eighth graders (or 2nd year high school students). It assesses achievement in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy "not merely in terms of mastery of the school curriculum, but in terms of important knowledge and skills needed in adult life."

In 2003, PISA added an additional domain of problem-solving "to examine the examination of cross-curriculum competencies."

The UN report says that "evidence from international assessments of reading skills is even more disturbing. Among the East Asian and Pacific countries included in the 2006 assessment, the proportion of students performing at or below level 1 of the reading literacy scale ranged from less than 6 percent in the Republic of Korea to 70 percent in Indonesia."

He would have benefited greatly from international assessments like TIMSS and PISA. Our neighbors in the region rarely did. Unfortunately, the Philippines participated in neither the 2000 PISA or the 2007 TIMSS. Why? Is it scared?

In case we know where we have supposed a long time ago. Philippine education is reeling largely from self-inflicted wounds.

In his opening remarks at the launch of Isiksa Ina Bristol's 10 (pets) Agenda (Inquirer, 1/22) Ed. Senator Edgardo J. Angara, Chairman Senate Education, Arts and Culture, said: "For time that we dominated our governmental leaders at all levels to demonstrate their genuine concern for the plight of millions of Filipino children. Our country deserves quality education for all. We demand it. We will settle over it. We shall fight for it. No more excuses."

Butch Hernandez (butchernandez@gmail.com) is the executive director of the Foundation for Worldwide Ayala Power.

Saving grace

BUSINESS MATTERS

Alberto A. Lim

IN CONSIDERING WE HAVE AND WITHIN the business community on the critical factors of teaching business competitiveness, one consistently theme stands out: governance. More concretely we have struggled with the lack of transparency and predictability of the regulator's environment as we operate in... from policy flip-flops, to the uneven playing field, to the sovereign exposure.

In recent years, as in the Makati Business Club have intervened in various ways to address the governance issue. We have pushed for legal and regulatory reform, actively participated in the work of the Coalition Against Corruption, and commissioned the Ease of Doing Business Survey.

I am happy to note that there is one landmark legislative initiative now at the threshold of becoming a law that will have immediate positive and strategic impact on governance. This is the Freedom of Information bill, which has finally approved by the Bicameral Conference Committee and only awaits ratification by both Houses of Congress before it is transmitted to President Macapagal-Arroyo for final approval into law.

This bill, when passed, will vastly improve transparency in governance. Among its key features, as summarized by the bill's advocates, are as follows:

First, it will provide a standard and definite procedure in dealing with requests for information. Requests, submitted personally by mail or through electronic means, need to be complied with by government agencies within 15 days.

Second, requests may be denied only when the information falls under exceptions narrowly defined, and the legitimate public interest in keeping them secret is clearly specified. These exceptions pertain to national defense, foreign affairs, law enforcement, personal privacy, trade secrets, congressional executive sessions, drafts of regulatory decisions, privileged information in legal proceedings, and such other information exempted by law or the Constitution.

Third, in cases of denial of access, citizens are given the right to appeal administratively or to ask for review by the Ombudsman or by the courts. When the denial appears to be valid, the bill will give citizens the opportunity to press a greater or overriding public interest in disclosure. Where the denial is illegal, the citizen concerned may file the appropriate criminal or administrative complaints.

Finally, it will provide sanctions for those found liable for disclosure to the public—without need of request from anyone—of government transactions of utmost public interest, such as procurement and infrastructure contracts, concession agreements, loans, and international agreements.

Fifth, it will provide numerous mechanisms for the active promotion of openness in government, such as the introduction of standards for the keeping of records, the obligation to publish important organizational information of agencies, and the requirement for government agencies to prepare a Freedom of Information Manual in public citizens' access to information.

The Freedom of Information Act will address the substantive and procedural gaps that have prevented open access to information held by government. This is a landmark law in that it gives broader access to documents relating to policy and regulation and allows us to make business decisions that are better informed and more accurate.

The passage of the Freedom of Information Act comes in a time when major government institutions—the Executive, the Ombudsman, the courts, the local governments, the Commission on Elections—suffer from serious credibility crises. Greater openness leading to greater accountability is key in starting the process of renewing our institutions.

In the start of the 14th Congress in 2007, all the major business clubs, industry associations, and domestic and foreign chambers of commerce met to agree on joint advocacy for priority legislation. After three days of discussions on pending bills, we reached a consensus on the top 12 laws we would push for over the next three years. Each organization was assigned a lead champion. Makati Business Club chose the Freedom of Information bill. We then joined more than 30 other business organizations and civil society groups in a campaign called "Right to Know, Right Now!"

The directory of the members of the coalition is a testament to the unifying power of this initiative. From an initial core group of more immediately-like-minded civil society organizations, they have been very supportive of the legislature.

The 14th Congress was constituted by the investigation of the NBN-ZTE scandal and its cover-up. The President dismissed executive privilege just when damaging testimony was to be given. With our legislation that could have defined the parameters of executive privilege, the Supreme Court upheld her on this contested doctrine. This was the key point for transparency and accountability in the government. The passage of the Freedom of Information Act will be a turning point that would add to the merit side of this government's record at when history judges it.

There are only three more session days before Congress adjourns for the campaign period. As this government slowly limps to its finish, it would do those good to reflect on the words of John Stewart's evangelical hymn:

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind but now I see.

Join the "Right to Know, Right Now!" campaign in calling on Congress to ratify the Bicameral Conference Committee Report on the Freedom of Information bill and to transmit it to the President for approval.

Alberto A. Lim is the executive director of the Makati Business Club.

Grandpa's toolbox

I HAD MY GRANDFATHER'S SECURITY, BUT HE DIDN'T SEE me. He was standing on a street corner wearing clothes that looked like they had been washed for days and worn that looked like they were ready to give up on him at any moment. He had with him his old, ever-used bicycle that was so worn out as the clothes he was wearing. At this time of his life, cycle was one thing I would not have mistaken for anything else: a toolbox.

My grandfather is the one person I know who can fix anything, from a leaking faucet to a sputtering motor. He is constantly fiddling things that are broken, and when something had been long fixed, he moves on to his next project.

My grandfather is also a master of improvisation. I still always look back to fond memories of childhood summers spent in the playground he himself built for my sister and me. Looking at him now, it would be hard for others to believe that instead of riding a bicycle, he used to drive the best cars, and that instead of carrying a toolbox around, he used to carry a briefcase.

Yes, my grandfather is a doctor. Only one who has the heart of a doctor can understand the compulsion to fix what is broken and create something out of nothing.

I don't remember my grandfather as an orthopedic surgeon serving in the Philippine Army. I remember him as the doctor who retired from his job but never from his career.

After his retirement, he had some lands in the Philippines to live a simple life in the province. I remember tagging along when he would go to his fishing harbor to see how he could provide medical services to the less fortunate. Our home was open to people from all walks of life who needed a second opinion or immediate medical attention. Every other summer, colleagues of his would fly in from Chicago and we would go to a different town every day for a week on a medical mission. Then from a very young age, I developed an interest in serving those who need medical help.

As I got older, I was given the opportunity to become actively involved in my grandfather's work. I was assigned the task of taking the patients' temperature, pulse rate and blood pressure. I learned to pay attention to each individual's same sense. Because sometimes the intensity of their pain could not be understood from the words they spoke but only by the look in their eyes. I met people who had touched me and wanted long to relieve their suffering. I realized that the joy of helping others in their pain subsided. I felt the sincere appreciation of those who had been helped by this group of selfless individuals.

I will always consider myself lucky to have had the opportunity to serve as an apprentice to such a dedicated and selfless man.

Ernest valentino, previously from "Dasher" and Typhoon "Ondoy" brought out the best and worst of the Filipino people. Those times of great loss and tragedy also gave the opportunity for caring and sharing with the victims.

A week after the typhoons hit, our community organized a relief operation targeting the hardest-hit surrounding the Marikina River in Rizal province. Many of the victims had lost material treasures and one the great need for health care among pregnant women in that area. And in that moment, I realized that the quality of life of a person begins in the mother's womb. But if babies can't be fully nourished or deprived of basic nutrition and care, how can the baby reach his potential? It was then that I knew that I wanted to dedicate myself to caring for the most basic needs of mothers.

I want to reach out to women in poor communities and provide them with the services needed for prenatal health care as well as the information they need to ensure a healthy pregnancy that will benefit both mother and child. One of their daughters, I want to be able to help them find ways to give birth in an environment where they may not be able to receive medical attention when the need arises, thus endangering their lives and that of their children. I hope to someday create a center women can go to for medical attention without worrying that it would drive them into debt.

Many of my friends have left Bohol or my city's best medical to remain in the Philippines while so many others would give up anything for the opportunity to go abroad. My answer is simple: there is where my heart is. I love the Philippines in a way that I cannot think of any other country say home. With the continuing rise of Filipinos leaving the country in hopes of gaining a better life abroad, I continue to hope that I can help make that better life here.

My grandfather has set a great example. It is my turn to continue what he has started. I hope for nothing more than that my future will be as successful as my grandfather's past and that the dedication to service lives on through me. That image of him on the street corner in worn out clothes, with worn out bicycle, is one I know will be for me a constant reminder to become a person of humble significance. My grandfather is an example of what it means to place importance not on what you wear, but on what you do, and not how you look, but how you work. I pray that I will always remember to go beyond what is convenient and take the path that's the most to do not choose to follow. My grandfather's toolbox will always remind me that I have the ability to fix what is broken and to create something beautiful. I just need to know what tools to use, how to use them and when.

Jessica Anne C. Bayona, 22, is a psychology graduate of Assumption College. She is working to start medical schools here.

YOUNG BLOOD

Jessica Anne C. Bayona

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from any twenty-something and below.—Ed.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph, together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if graduated, the part you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions is unsigned should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Non sequitur

"It may not be untrue to say ... that homosexuality per se does not fall within the ambit of the penal law. ... That one's affections towards people of the same sex easily translate to lust and immorality is obviously a non sequitur.

—Reg Lesbaf, petitioning the Supreme Court to nullify the transmission of the term "sodomites disqualifying the group of on the party-list election

The INQUIRER is a member of the
PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

Reducing presidential bets to detergents, canned goods

AS A VOTER, I AM GRATE (LAMED) by the huge amounts being spent by candidates for election propaganda. The kinds of illusions-ads on radio, TV and print is proving worse every day and we still have four months to go before election day.

Before the stewing public gets nauseated by the excessive display of spending powers, politicos should be warned of its possible negative effects on their candidates' selves.

There are limits to the effectiveness of propaganda. When the saturation point is reached, it triggers the opposite response. When a TV or radio program is interrupted several times by repetitive film clips, the viewer/listener tends to switch to other programs, indicating that the message has been received, and seeing the same visuals again and again is unnecessary. It tempts viewers to start asking questions as to the source of funding and how much contributions would be paid back here. Some observers say that one of the reasons for GMA's negative ratings is the fact she's is seen repeatedly and that her boosting voice-overs/ads ran and all "Ako ang Pag-asa, asahi mong sa," and "Ako ang Simula radio listeners. For indeed, everybody knows that already.

Leading personal satisfaction are already well-known figures by the time they run for higher office. Only unknown faces of their persona need to be highlighted. Batters big on the viewers could reduce them to the category of detergents and canned goods. Informal marketing is a different game.

Of what good then, are the millions of pesos spent on infomercials if in the end they would pass grammar-negative results? Haven't we had the fact that their favorite shows are crowded out by self-admiring and inane monologues.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago is right in cancelling Malacañang's ad for government appointees-found she "forgave with" of the administration. Onerous, 1/28/09 Quite late in the day the call is an invitation to possible violence certain government-wide rules on fund drives. It merely draws attention to how the Arroyo administration wrests Funds already allocated for specific purposes. Isn't this an example of an expensive public extension mistake?

If serious change in our governance system is what we want after the 2010 elections, let's start with being fair to our advocates and minimize nonsense-vibrating nonsense.

—EVA B. JACKING
1568 BRU, Palma Square Condominium,
145 15th Avenue, Cubao, QC

Nation demands explanation from Senator Villar

THE INVESTIGATIONS DURING THE HONORable Mrs. during the presentation of the Senate committee report on the controversial C-5 road extension project turned more than five hours of people's time and money. The majority members are small matter Sen. Manuel Villar, who seeks the highest position in the land, should face the embarrassment on the Senate floor to clear his name.

Mentions being clear or hand, ordinary Filipinos are in no mood to demand "honest, evidence" or a one-liners from those the know. When they have heard a "substantial and credible explanation" enough for them to start the good seminar to confront the accusers on the Senate floor where the report was read and heard, and defend himself before them.

Whether or not the issue is political or judicially movement should go well with all politicos. It seems that the former subject today is our concern, as much as does a presidential aspirant has made a public vow that "I shall not steal"—a statement that time has yet to prove.

Till the wood pass and Constitution decree by the senators in each other during Senate hearings concerns (sign from time) behavior, but they are not convention (precisely) when the discussions turn arousing and, at times, "too hot" to handle.

—LEONIDES REES LAWSON,
leeson@yahoo.com

Noynoy Aquino didn't push for SCTEx

I WRITE IN REPLY TO HNA 14, Cruz's column titled "Villar's C-5 franchise vs. Noynoy's SCTEx." (Inquirer, 1/22/10) In that column, Cruz curiously repeated a number of allegations hurled at Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III by Crispin Beltrella.

There are just three points I would like to make. First, the P82 million paid by the Toll Concession Development Authority (TCDA) to Manuela Loinaz for compensation for the land right of way and use for the construction of the interchange. The pro-rata of the land was to accordance with the government's original plan by SCTEx, and did not require any diversion whatsoever. In the C-5 controversy, the original plan was abandoned to give way to the road re-alignment which traversed a number of lots, Manny Villar's properties.

Second, Aquino did not participate in any rebidding of the project, neither did he lobby for it in any forum. Aquino certainly did not use his influence as a legislator to push for the project. This is in stark contrast to the case of Villar who even used funds from the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food (SAF) to pay for the road right of way purchased from his own companies.

Lastly, unlike Villar's overriding interest in the companies that benefited from the C-5 irregularities, Aquino's interest in CLI is limited to less than 1 percent of the entire shareholdings.

The issue is not about Aquino, but he has been maliciously dragged into the fray by Villar's allies in their desperate effort to turn a straightforward government transaction into an empty controversy, perhaps to divert attention from their candidate's unpopular billionaire-defined himself to the bottom.

—EDWIN LACIERDA,
spadegeneroso.
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Erap Estrada the monarch

THE NEWS ITEM ON Joseph "Erap" Estrada wanting to be a "king" again. (Inquirer, 1/23/10) shows the true character of the person and how he views the presidency.

A king is served, a true president serves.

—REGINO B. GO
Jr. VIA PA...
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Makati City

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We have all letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

6 Pinoys back, tell of concrete crashing, etc.

From page A1

life to find a way out," she said between sobs. Her five Haitian coworkers were killed instantly. "I don't know what happened to the others," she said.

Gregorio Barsaris Jr., 47, who was already home when the quake occurred, said he immediately rushed to his wife's office to check on her. He leapt off the third floor of their three-story building and escaped through the streets of Port-au-Prince in a car only to find a heap of rubble in the site of his wife's office building.

"When I found her, she was hurt. It was difficult to get any treatment because the hospital emergency room was filled with other victims," he said, adding that he gave her wife first aid.

Donna still has difficulty walking and was brought in a wheelchair to the arrival area to meet the media when she and the two other survivors arrived at Terminal 2 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

300 OFWs in Haiti

A Philippine National Red Cross staffer checked on Donna's injuries, cleaning the cuts and replacing bandages. He said it was hard to rule out a fracture on her arm pending an X-ray but from what he could see it seemed to be a bruise with abrasions.

According to the Department of Foreign Affairs, about 300 Filipinos work in Haiti, mainly in the oil and mineral industries, or with missionary organizations and various businesses.

Four Filipinos working for the United Nations Stabilization Mission (Minustah) were killed in the quake, while two others are believed to be still trapped in a supermarket.

Manning, 48, a staff manager at a casino, was getting ready to leave his work when the tremor shook the house that he and his relatives were renting at the Haitian capital. A wall of the two-story house sustained a major crack, but it did not fall to pieces, he said.

Sleeping outside

"After the quake, we slept outside. We pitched a tent to the garage because we were afraid that there would be aftershocks while we slept and the house might crash down on us," he said.

Rosario said she had just gotten off work and had parked up her niece, Mikaela, 13, from school. They drove to a gasoline station before going home.

"I wondered why people outside (the station) were running in panic," said Rosario, who was working as a store manager for a paint manufacturer.

"I felt the car as I went to check. In a split second, the station's roofing fell," crushing her car and a vehicle behind her. The driver of the car behind her was killed instantly, she said.

When the quake struck, Cruz said, her coworkers rushed to the exits. She decided to stay put, thinking it the most prudent thing to do as she was afraid she would be trampled by panicking officemates.

She held on to a table in pieces of furniture raining (re)lently around her.

Cruz said after it was all over, the building was still standing although I think a minor tremor could bring the whole thing down," said Cruz, who works as an administrative manager for a garments factory.

Cruz said she was concerned about the children in Haiti as they were the most traumatized by the disaster.

She also worries about her friends, Geraldine Labran and Grace Tolaire. When she left Port-au-Prince, the information she got was that tensions were rigging through a supermarket section where it was thought the two might be buried.

Managers, supervisors

Manning, who has been in Haiti for the past nine years, said working in Haiti was fine despite the country's poverty.

"We're managers and supervisors there and we get paid well," he said.

He found work in Port-au-Prince through the recommendations of an aunt, a nominee enough practice among Filipinos whose business sessions advantage for an extra hand, he noted. He has an aunt and cousins who have decided to stay outside Port-au-Prince.

Stress debriefing

Carmelita Dimzon, the chief of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), said the services would be given, depending stress debriefing and psycho-social counseling to help deal with their families.

Even the slightest rumor was deeply unsettling, according to the repatriates.

"I panicked a couple of times on the flight home when the plane hit some turbulence," Gregorio said.

Manning said he and the others on the way staying with family had a good night's sleep after the quake but a number of aftershocks. He feared another deadly tremor could kill them.

Gregorio and Donna, who worked as a painter mechanic and office manager for an insurance firm, respectively, were anxious to their gratitude to the government for the support they received, from the speedy processing of their travel papers to the plane tickets from Overseas.

Evelyn Rosa, executive director of the OWA response, officials of foreign affairs, the officials of the consular service to Haiti were helping Filipinos who expressed interest in being repatriated.

This involves a lengthy process that include having to obtain two travel exit visas from the Dominican Republic and the United States.

Dimzon said some of the Filipinos who survived the quake were ambivalent about returning to the Philippines, reluctant to give up the jobs that they have built in Port-au-Prince.

"That's why our list changes from time to time," she said.

She said the Filipino evacuation to Haiti had interruptions after the aftershocks in the month of the April 2009 quake in Dipolog, Iligan.

"We were also evacuating families in Iloilo. We had the children of the workers on board the planes, while their parents stayed behind," she said.

From Port-au-Prince, the Filipinos went by car across the border to the Dominican Republic where they boarded a flight to Miami. They took a connecting flight to Los Angeles where a direct flight to Manila was waiting.

The second batch of repatriates scheduled to arrive today while still another group is set to arrive on Monday.

BACK FROM HELL. Owwa Administrator Carmelita Dimzon meets six Filipinos who survived the magnitude-7 quake that killed tens of thousands in Haiti. They are Donna Bacarisa, Mikaela Santos, Rachelle Cruz, Gregorio Barsaris Jr., Susan Ia Santos and Sonny Maning. They are the first batch of repatriates. A second batch is due today

Haiti teen beats Pinoy baker's record but he sheds tears of joy

From page A1

ends. By gave home to catch the latest news about the Haiti tragedy.

A body-building enthusiast, By said all he wanted since the 1990 quake was the chance to help the locals.

By said he cried tears of joy when he saw Binoian's lively eyes as he debuted. Finishing the marathon was carried out on a stretcher.

He said he also felt sad for many people still trapped in the collapsed buildings in Haiti.

By used to cook for high-rollers and big spenders who booked rooms regularly at the Hyatt Terrianes Regency, which operated a casino.

Daylight Savings Time was in effect and people had settled in for a lazy afternoon, By said, recalling the day the 1990 quake struck.

By said he had cooked his dish and was at the appointed spot at the basement of the Hyatt when the magnitude-7.7 quake struck at 3:05 p.m. (GST). The massive building toppled like dominoes.

Corpses around him

By said he was pinned right on his back for days, and survived on whatever moisture he could suck out from the debris.

He remembered the salty bitter taste of the liquid he managed to lap up.

"In obedience to, mastering penny or coin to. Kinakgos ko ang mga patay. Dedmo akong mga kasama ang sa akjuet na patay," he said.

Others were many corpses beside me. I was praying for them. They were my 12 fellow workers at Hyatt and they were dead.

Not alone

For a while, By realized he was not the only survivor. Nearby, the gym secretary named Rosaly and a laundry man were rescued. Many were also recognizing in fire.

"For the first two days [after I realized Rosaly and Rosaly were alive], I spoke to them. We encouraged. They were badly injured. We had to find a way to clean the water," By said.

By would stock up water using trash stuffing, and would closely push the material down his thighs. Finally, the closest persons save him, had to stand slowly and reach out for the stuffing.

By said he never heard from them again after two days.

Thanks to home flies

On July 30, or about two weeks after the quake, By said he had grown desperate. He had been talking with home flies that had hatched their way through the cracks.

Unbeknown to By, the flies had drawn the attention of miners working for Holes Mining. They finally cracked him down through the rubble.

At about 4 a.m. of July 31, they succeeded in pulling By out.

By his reckoning, By was entombed for 13 days. A check with the Japanese ambassador showed he was buried in the rubble for roughly 13 days and 12 hours.

Names go but not the faces

By said he had forgotten the names of the miners, but not their faces. Some of these miners were among the workers who head from the shop where he now works.

One of his rescuers surprised him once when he came with a son, "and the kid was taller than me," By said.

The rubble and the corpses were images that never left him.

By said his nerves become fired up when a typhoon rages by or when a landslide occurs.

When Tropical Depression "Ondoy" isolated Baguio for three days in October last year, By said he remained out of his home at the Baguio Country Club village to help the people displaced by landslides.

But it was the Haiti quake that brought the nightmares back to By.

"Its earthquake could again strike Baguio. There's nothing we can do. That's how nature is," he said.

From father to son

By has three children, but only the oldest, Peter Bri, 22, was around when the 1990 quake rumbled through the mountain city. The other 3 were old then.

By said Bri was why he had told his story to Dray. Let Angeles, 15, and Pedrito Jr., 7.

Nagi-kong sinasabi sa mga bata na huwag silang iiyakin. Magkaroon ako ng matibay-pang tiniis. Ang sabi ko sa kanila, Hindi ako iiyak. Hindi ako iiyak. Hindi ako iiyak.

Editor Teddyboy S. Molondres
Associate Editor Francis T.J. Ortuoste
SPORTS

Yaps power Purefoods

Tropang Texters dump Gin Kings

By Jasmine W. Payo

PUREFOODS HAD ZERO YAP ON THE mark early, but she turned to its team mate's namesake, Rogyn Yap, in the final seconds to stave off the rallying Kings en route to a 90-88 victory in Game 1 of the KFC-PBA Philippine Cup quarterfinals last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

Yap unloaded 20 of her 21 points in the first half, then turned up snow to knock in a key three-pointer that gave the Giants an 82-78 buffer heading into the final four minutes.

"We expected a tough game especially with newcomers on their side," said coach Ryan Gregorio after the Giants claimed the upper of the best-of-five series. "But I told the players that in the end, it's still our defense that will hold us out."

In the other quarterfinal duel, Talk 'N Text dumped Barangay Ginebra, 100-92, to likewise take a 1-0 lead.

Rogyn Yap sizzled off seven straight points in a fourth-quarter run, including a triple with 6:34 minutes left that pushed the Giants ahead, 82-78, after falling back by three, 75-76, early in the fourth quarter.

Gregorio credited the Giants' defensive effort against Sol Mercado, the rookie guard who erupted with 27 points, including seven-for-high 23 markers, in his last three outings with the Elasto Painters.

"It's not just Rogyn who was our first line of defense [against Mercado], but it was our team defense really that stymied the offensive options of Sol Mercado," said Gregorio.

Rogyn Yap finished with 37 points, but nested the Giants' victory by hitching a 6-foot against Mercado following a crucial steal with 28.2 seconds remaining.

Yap nailed one of his two free throws to confirm the Giants' advantage, 89-86, after the Elasto Painters' Reverend Gotladera nailed a clinching triple with the top-seeded Manila Aces.

PUREFOODS 90 — Yap 21, E. Ilo 19, Ayenoyan 15, Quinahan 11, Pascual 6, Evans 5, Cruz 5, Castro 3, Ardina 2, Sta. Ana 2, Salvador 2, Sandoval 0.

KFC 88 — Mercado 27, Reyes 15, Gotladera 12, Ardina 7, Ilo 6, Salvador 5, Sandoval 5, Cruz 5, Castro 3, Ardina 2, Sta. Ana 2, Salvador 2, Sandoval 0.

Quarters: 21-22, 41-48, 75-72, 90-88

NICO Hainline of Purefoods challenges Galen Haywood of Rain or Shine with a reverse layup in last night's game.

RP Patriots out to draw first blood vs Dragons

By Jasmine W. Payo

COACH JOSIE ALAS thinks the Philippine Patriots have done work on, not be there in the Asean Basketball League semifinals.

The top-seeded Patriots will go up against the fourth-seeded Kuala Lumpur Dragons—one of the only two teams that swept Alas' wards with a surprise blowout victory—in Game 1 of their best-of-three semifinal series tomorrow at the Filoil Sports Arena in Pasig City.

Game time is 6 p.m.

"It won't be easy going up against Kuala Lumpur; remember they beat us by 16 points," said Alas. "I think they're the top defensive team in the league right now."

Harbour Center CEO and president Hilbert Romero, who co-owns the Patriots with TNT top honcho Tony Boy Cojuangco, also scored the Dragons' firepower.

"We have to take them seriously since the Dragons are on a roll," Romero said of the Dragons, who won their last three assignments, including a complete 77-59 rout of the Patriots, last Jan. 16.

"We have to raise our level of game several notches, especially in defense."

The second-seeded Singapore Slingers will clash with No. 3 Indonesian Satria Muda Britama in the other pairing of the home-and-away semifinals.

The Patriots, who entered a late collapse with the addition of American import Eddie Pinkerton, claimed the No. 1 berth after topping the elimination with an 11-4 record.

Pinkerton, the 2005 PBA first import who replaced Brandon Powell, averaged 20.3 points in his first two games with the Patriots.

"He's an outstretch, he can shoot, jump and defend," said Romero. "But more importantly, he's a good leader. He's a perfect partner of our other import Jason Dixon."

NEW leader Angelo Que makes his putt on No. 14.

Second straight 68 boosts Que to TCC lead by 2 shots

By Marvin R. Castillo

STA. ROSA, LAGUNA—AMONG HIS MENTEES caught more than ever, Angelo Que pleased no golfer as a second straight two-under par 68 to zoom to a two-stroke lead over Jeremy Bates halfway through the PAGCOR Philippine The Country Club Invitational here.

The 2007 champion Que has never led this tournament before and hopes that his steady hand to secure weekend play carries him through to another big payday this time worth P1.45 million.

"I have always had one lead in the past, that's why they never led," said Que, who now has a 136-aggregate. "I hope I can maintain until over the years. My game is improving, yes, but the key right now to the way I'm thinking on and off the course."

Bates had a double and is happy to go with two birdies for a 71 that pulled him down to solo second at 138, two shots ahead of a three-man group that included lady amateur Dottie Ardina, who shot another 70 to be tied-runner-champion Andy Pagcanan.

Martin Dumandan was the other man at 140 after a 72, even as repeat-making defender Frankie Miraflores eventually withdrew after a 78 left him five off at 145, in the company of reigning Philippine Open champion Elmer Salvador, who also had a 78.

Salvador, the hottest player on the tour coming in to this tournament, said a swing change after winning the Open at Philippine in Lipa City last month has not produced low scores.

"The driver wasn't still in the key," said Monakoon, who won by a record 13 strokes last year. "If I can hit it [from the tee] perfectly to about two or three, then there's still a chance."

Amateur Shiseh Fernando stumbled into a bogey-bogey start and returned a 73 to be at 142, like journeyman Ronel Ubano and Mars Pocay.

Bates charged out a 32 while Pocay who lay just a stroke off then overnight, submitted a 74.

Another past winner, Jovenie Delarmente, rebounded with a 69 after an opening 77 to be at 146 in the company of also-ran Elmer Soriano, who had a 73.

"I still continue to stick to the plan," Bates said. "It's all fairways and greens for me."

Several notables, like 1998 BP Open champ Jimboy Pichetcha and Freddie Bustos, missed the halfway cut at 146. Pichetcha shot 75 and 76, while Bustos, who broke through as a pro in the Northwoods leg last year, had a 74-76.

The second round scores:

138—A. Que 68-70
138—J. Bates 67-71
140—M. Dumandan 68-72
140—A. Pagcanan 70-70 (A. Ardina def.)
140—D. Ardina 70-70 (A. Pagcanan)
142—E. Salvador 71-71
142—J. Delarmente 77-69
142—R. Ubano 71-71
142—M. Pocay 68-74
145—E. Soriano 72-73
145—F. Miraflores 67-78
146—J. Pichetcha 75-71
146—F. Bustos 72-74
147—S. Fernando 74-73
148—R. Ubano 71-77
149—M. Pocay 74-75
150—E. Soriano 73-77
151—J. Pichetcha 76-75
152—F. Bustos 74-78

Pacman hurts first sparmate

MANNY PACQUIAO PUT ON A SHOW RIGHT on his first day of sparring at the Wild Card Gym in Hollywood on Thursday.

"Usually, it takes three or more sessions for Manny to get into his rhythm, but not this one," said assistant trainer Robert Fernandez to Philippine boxing e-television newsletter on EMAIL 7. "He showed us what he's capable of right away."

According to reports, Pacquiao who will defend his World Boxing Organization welterweight crown against Ghanaian Joshua Clottey on March 13 in Arlington, Texas, beat light middleweight journeyman Bryan Brooks a few times during the free-round sparring.

Pacquiao attributed his form to his good physical condition, saying that he weighs in at 144 pounds, 16 pounds below the 160 lb limit from Miguel Cotto via a 12th round stoppage. Abe Asuncion

SPORTSWATCH

MCC 1850-below chess today

THE MCC 1850-BELOW STANDARD RATING chess tournament from all of 1 pm today at the lower second floor of St. Francis Square in Mandaluyong.

Open to beginners, unrated and rated players with RDW ratings not over 1850, the four-round Swiss-system tilt has choices of schedule: Two days and one day rounds.

The two-day tournament employs the 30-minutes/one control to all five rounds. The one-day round clocking of 10 each for-fourteen will use the 25-minute time control in the first three rounds and 10 minutes in the last two.

The tournament offers a top prize of P1,000 for the champion.

For inquiries, call the MCC at 8886881; 8863-0190 and 709-5852 local 5000.

SJC Int'l Derby semis unfolds

FORTY-ONE 3-YEAR-OLD HORSES TAKE SEMIfinal today at the resumption of the SJC International 3-Race Derby at the San Juan Coliseum.

The contest performers come from a field of 12-runners and are led by 2009 World Stallion Cup champion Master John, Ramon Dungca-Jesby Investment, Tagaytay 8-02 of Pablito Antonio. Behind Master John are Team, Mayor Buddy Dance, Adrian Manalaysay, Rainy Mercado, Jose Rodolfo Pineda, Rafael Reis and Eric Reis Pena.

The championship round is on Monday.

Send your Sportswatch to the 2009 Big Event & Crack Derby on Feb. 3 with Bombay and Tess Lagaya as hosts.

New knockout star rises; Panabo pugs stay on top

By Recah Trinidad

PUERTO PRINCESA—THE HOST PROspective international emerged on Thursday after Venesio Sabalde of Davao del Norte scored a second straight stoppage to the semifinal round of the Smart-Shop National Boxing Championships here.

Complaints about unfair judging, however, started to surface following three days of trouble-free action.

Businessman Sabalde, younger brother of national flyweight competitor Reg awarded William Bagana of Puerto Princesa from A to submission for his second straight victory by retirement.

"He's the most consistent among the early winners," national coach Pat Gaspi said of Sabalde.

Gaspi said the young winner should be a strong contender for the 51 team to the World Youth Olympics in August.

Sabalde, 18, was not expected to encounter serious trouble in the gold-medal round last yesterday against Biron James Gob of Tayabas, whose points win over a lanceman might gold medalists from the National Capital Region become the subject of a complaint (See Blow Byrons 4333).

Powerhouse Panabo of Davao del Norte, which won in a total of six fights, six of 11 semifinalists, into the gold-medal round, was tabbed to finish on top of the medal race.

By finishing No. 1, the RTU Blue Thunder will enjoy a twice-to-beat bonus against No. 4 Rotrand Tagaig in their semifinal meeting on Sunday.

Third-ranked Phinma-Isabela Power meets No. 2 Globe Asiatique Realtors in the other semifinal pairing with the Realtors also enjoying a twice-to-beat edge.

Last Sunday's games saw Air Force split its last two games, beating CBC 7-0, in its first game but bowing to Tagaig, 5-7, in the second. Air Force ended up with a 4-win 4-loss slate like Tagaig and the GA Realtors, but lost on the run-

PHILSA Carolina Naron (red) of Tayabas circuit fours after receiving a punch combination from Puerto Princesa-B's Aida Hugo in their pinweight bout Thursday.

RTU sweeps softball elims, guns for finals tomorrow

POWERHOUSE RTU THEBOOKcal University dumped cyclist-dweller CBC Hard-up Bulala, 7-0, last Sunday to complete an eight-game sweep of its elimination round assignments in the softball Olympian league at the Rizalito Sports Complex in Pasig City.

Air Force (4-4) will take on Tagaig (4-4) in the first game of the semifinals tomorrow at 1 p.m. with the winner to face RTU in the finals.

The Blue Thunder will play the winner of the second semifinal game between Phinma-Isabela and Globe Asiatique.

The Go Brothers nipped Tagaig, 2-1, as reliever Phinma and Tagaig with a pair 5-3 in the tiebreaker. Phinma and minus-1 while Tagaig was at minus-4 in the tournament presented by Gilmarin Distiller and sponsored by GSC. Abe Asuncion

Wesley battles Dutch genius for Corus lead

WIJK AAN ZEE, Netherlands—Two sensations Wesley So of the Philippines and fellow Grandmaster Anish Giri of the Netherlands clash in the pivotal 13th round Friday in the 72nd Corus chess tournament at the town's Hotel Marktzicht Conference Center.

GIRI: Passionate

The 16-year-old So, seeded sixth here with an Elo of 2695, handles white against the pacesetting Giri, 21, who is playing well above his Elo of 2686 in the category 14, 14-player Group B.

With three rounds to go, Giri owns 7.0 points, just half a point clear of So, Chinese GM Bu Xiangzhi and Dutch GM Dmitry Jakovenko.

A win by So, whom Giri mocked when he stunned World Championship contender Vassily Ivanchuk and Loek Van Wely in last month's 2009 World Cyber Cup, will relieve pads into the stats lead or share it, depending on how Ni Hua Ivanchuk fare in their matches.

Ni takes on GM Pentala Harikrishna of India, while Ivanchuk battles International Master Anton Muzychuk of Slovenia.

In their first meeting in last year's edition of the three-division Corus Cup, So held Giri to a draw with black.

So eventually topped Group C with 6½, ahead of Nepal's Sandipan and Surakarta resort, placing joint second and completing his third and final GM norm.

Giri became the youngest Russian Chess was officiated with the Russian federation there to do so at 14 years, 7 months and 2 days.

So earned his GM title at 14 years, 1 month and 28 days, the seventh youngest to do so.

According to rex onio Filipino GM Bogalio laments it, So has a good chance of beating Giri because he is handling white, a playing well, need to prove himself currently.

Antonio also said that So, one of two unsatisfied players, appears to be on a hot streak, winning three of his last five matches after five straight draws.

Apart from GM Tuni Nyhuis of Finland in the 10th round, Nyhuis white Antonio were second and GM Livio Dieter Nilgiorgio of Romania and GM Dimitri Reinderman of the Netherlands in the sixth and seventh rounds.

Giri's remaining foes are English GM David Howell and woman IM Anna Muzychuk.

WORLD No. 1 Roger Federer of Switzerland hits a return against France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga.

Federer eases into Open final

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—Roger Federer is through to his 22nd Grand Slam final after defeating Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, 6-3, 6-3, 6-4, in a near-flawless display Friday at the Australian Open.

Seeking his fourth Australian title, hopes to reverse his woe filled exit from last year's final when he was beaten by Rafael Nadal, the left-handed Spaniard's first hard-court title.

This time, the men between Federer and another title foe Andy Murray, whose last victim has been fueled by a 76-year drought for British stars in Grand Slam singles.

Murray beat Mario Gilic in the semifinals after ousting Nadal in the quarterfinals. Now, hopes are high in the United Kingdom that he could be the first British man since Fred Perry in 1936 to win a major singles title.

"I know he'd like to win the first for British tennis since, what is it, 136,000 years?" Federer joked in the owned mind much laughter. "The poor guy who has to go through those moments over and over again."

Federer reached his 16th final in the last 18 Grand Slam events by overpowering the 2008 Australian Open finalist. His semifinal loss here to Novak Djokovic in 2006 being the only break in the finals sequence.

Earlier, Serena and Venus Williams won their fourth consecutive Open doubles title, beating Cara Black and Liezel Huber, 6-4, 6-3.

Serena is hoping for a 12th Slam title in the final on Saturday against Justine Henin. AP

Tolentino: I'm still national cycling chief

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TAGAYTAY CITY MAYOR ABRAHAM "Bambol" Tolentino yesterday said a court injunction against his term as president of the national cycling association was only temporary and has since lapsed.

That means, according to Tolentino, that he has regained the authority to run the sport's governing body, which has been plagued by leadership disputes. It peaked last year when Philsports teams were barred from competing in the Laos Southeast Asian Games.

In a text message, Tolentino said: "There is no court injunction, it was only a TRO (temporary restraining order) with a life span of 20 days. They were not able to secure preliminary injunction."

The TRO was issued by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 93 last Oct. 12.

A search online, the same court decided a similar petition for TRO against Tolentino filed by the same group represented by Armando Ibardaloza.

Tolentino refuted the claim of the Philippine Olympic Committee that the cancer supervision against him is still in effect.

VILORIA

Viloria: It's hard to stop, boxing is in my veins

By Cedrik F. Tigas

IT WAS BARELY NINE MONTHS AGO WHEN Brian Viloria, fighting back-to-back of big second victories over Mexican champion Hiber Soto at the Veterans Coliseum in Cubao.

The Hawaiian held so much promise for the "Hawaiian Punch," who went on to defend the IBF junior flyweight title one more time.

A 22th-round technical knockout in Cubao

Soto Carlos Tamara last Saturday, however, has dashed the Viloria's future in the sport.

"It's still too hasty to come up with a decision now," said Viloria, looking puffed up, a bruised but covering his left eyebrow, in the first public appearance since the knockout defeat to Tamara and his subsequent hospitalization at the Makati Medical Center.

"I've been boxing since I was five. It's something that runs through my veins."

Viloria, who is set to fly to Los Angeles today and has several path will depend on the discussions with his team, led by manager Gary Gittelsohn, in the United States.

"We'll take a look at my health first," the two-time world champion said. "It's hasty to speed go one to that hideous."

The 29-year-old Viloria, who dominated the first eight rounds before losing steam, said he could have gone toe-to-toe with Tamara in the later rounds, where he took a lot of beating.

Referee Steve McDonich stopped the fight after 1:4 unanswered punches by Tamara with 1:45 left in the last round.

"I think three is thought I was hurt," he said. "But before it was over, I could've kept on fighting until my last breath."

Viloria said his "mind seemed to fight, but dehydration caused his body to shut down."

He collapsed after the fight.

No pause from foul, depressing judging

BARE EYE

Ricardo Trinidad

FUERTE PERCIVA—SOMETHING strange and very harmful happened after Brian Ilio, 143 of the Guam chap National Open Boxing Championships semifinals at the City Coliseum here on Thursday.

A frustrated coach from the Manila National Capital Region team claimed that his son was declared loser in a bout the referee had clearly won on points.

Sterling Hotel Jay Manalac stayed on watch in claiming that his son Gabriel, gold medalist in the SEA Amateur Boxing qualifying competition last 2009, was cheated after fighting a 3-0 decision over Brian Silvera Jason Gelb of Davao City, whom hand was raised by the referees after the final bell.

* * *

Manalac could not find a more explanation.

"In fact, the coach of Gab, John Magbiguin, came over to us and said that Gabriel should've won on points," Manalac complained to the bajuan personally.

OK, to need all the depression, shrugs and his son, together with another coach and two other boxers, had off to the Bantay base on Wilma Beach, about 15 minutes by bicycle from their school-boarder quarters here.

They usually found solace in the pristine sea waters and early quiet shores.

* * *

This was shortly after 10 in the bright, sunny morning.

The group, out to unwind broken spirits, were making just the deepest portion when Alberto Gabriel ever vigorous Nan.

"You look like ... of the bajuans," the SEA coach quipped.

He received a smile and a nod.

"We just went to rest some explosion, ehem, in order," how a soprano like you," he opened up.

* * *

Manalac then proceeded to hear out. It was not a mere explanation he was asking. "Be poor fellow seemed to seek justice.

"In the first place, how can they disqualify a boxer just because of a knockdown if boxers are declared winner?" he argued.

But this was supposed to be an impromptu beach bar chit-chat happen, he was unaware.

"I understand, but it's not so hot and good as opposed to the papers."

* * *

Well, for the record, the first three days of the tournament in 19 different classes among Division aged 11 to 18 were unanimous.

But since the crossbeak on Thursday the sporty portions suddened.

In Boys 101 to the bubble weight Gil Igil, Richard Rivera of Mindoro City ruled a unanimous decision over Ian Ian Dilda of Puerto Princesa Team B.

Several coaches at tingside, including those from Baguio and Mindoro Oriental, however, howled when the Bantay Dilda managed volunteer decision.

* * *

Query and referred Jay Joshua Ian Gamella came to the superior half an hour after he was declared loser, 2-3.

Gamella floored Tanauan of Mandaue City.

He seemed to thumb as the stunning loss that he did quite well.

Actually, the poor kid did not lose.

He won with finesse carried up with a 17-all score.

A similar comeback was required, although this was not announced.

Unfortunately, the boxers and everybody else in the arena were left to wonder indefinitely as to such the jury a Mindoro before finally coming up with the official result, 3-2, based on the accumulative scores of the five judges.

Young Star Claire Ble Cervera reasons to suspect three had been a fatsup reason.

* * *

Well, as Manalac tried to philosophize, there's nothing left! Going with scores ...as long as they are known calendars.

He was right; things cannot be readily perfected, considering that the new rules in the Amp it just starting to receive from world, some systems.

But what's really harmful, explained the frustrated father-coach, is that this kind of thing happens over kids to break the spirit.

Nat'l golf pool aces head DHL entries

KEENA: Ladies fave

MEMBERS OF THE national pool and the other top players in the ranks join it up on Feb. 9 to 12 in the 11th WWWExpress-DHL National Amateur Golf Championship scheduled at the north course of the Canlubang golf complex in Laguna.

Reigning national champion Mikaela Keena and fellow ICTSI ranks teammate Jennifer Arabit, Peter Villabos, Jhonnel Ababa and former champion Ballesteros head the roster in the 72-hole men's division of the event sponsored by WWWExpress and DHL.

Children Bedia leads the cast in the 54-hole ladies event firing off 86s, 18 with the SEA Games gold medalist working a three-putt against her teammates in the ICTSI golf ranks, including former national champion Anya Turpimo and Sarah Abaña.

Registration will end at 5 p.m. on Feb. 5, according to the organizing National Golf Association of the Philippines.

Former Singapore amateur champ Quincy Quek outlasted Perdie Asuncion in a classic six-hole playoff to gathering duck the top last year's Asian Tour, conducted by the NGAP in conjunction with Canlubang Golf and Country Club.

Although both players have joined the pro ranks, a dozen-or-the-rules battle for top honors on a spree reported in the event, put up by WWWExpress chief Ned Ribelcion.

Leading the early meet's starters are Kim Inseng-pyon, Angelo Estillores, Lourenzo Gerbolingo, Jomar Acosta, Christian Arbie Sales, Nopparadol Bhgo and Chalitmon of Indonesia.

Registration fee is P1,800 for cute and P1,200 for seniors inclusive of a starter meal and tee. For inquiries, call NGAP at (632) 631-7268 or fax (632)631-6 call Jen Campol office at (632)631-7268.

Former champs seek another NCA victory

FORMER CHAMPION GAME birds are back to compete in the new National Cockers Alliance (NCA) derby on Feb. 3 at the Tinajeros Sports Avenue in Dasig City.

Previous winners Butch Nes Good Shepherd, FBI Gamefarm, Diego, Jennifer RC, Firefly 13 and Jessie Cassaca are hoping to strike again in the NCA derby formed by Undersecretary Bebot Villar, Major Villaroel and Mayor Uy.

Expectations are high also for the entries of Danny Sison, armed and Manny Santos, Patrick Antonio, Tommy Chua and Danny dela Cruz.

Other entries to watch out for in the Inquisitor Complexor specialized derby are the sons of Elmer Segovia with Sons Medina and Ely de Guzman, Gerry Ibanez, Rudy Alfonso and Jimmy Ang, Jim dito Sison, Ricky Magtoto, Rod Bautista, Philip Buenaobra, Rene Asentis, Ethan Cunha, Randy Ibanez, Boy Batu, Ka Ludring, Rubey dela Cruz, WTO Group, Sen. Vic Sto. Vic Gen. Al Magsaysay, Sanchez Claves, Rudy Ibanez, Ricky Reyes, Ting and Allan Rabida, Ramon Manemanes, Allan Sison, Joey delos Santos, Capt. Ernie, Boy Batu and Madding Inquisitor locations.

Lewis layup caps Magic's comeback win over Celtics

ORLANDO'S Rashard Lewis celebrates his game-winning shot.

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—Rashard Lewis' layup with 1.3 seconds remaining over the Celtics Magic rap a rally from a 16-point deficit to beat the Boston Celtics, 96-94, in the NBA on Thursday.

Lewis took the ball after a broken play and spiraled down the baseline past Kevin Garnett for an unprotected layup.

Rasheed Wallace missed a three-pointer at the buzzer, giving the Magic their second victory to three games against the Celtics this season. Orlando moved level with defance atop the Southeast Division.

In Phoenix, counters Dorell Wright, Marcus Camby and Louis Amundson led an unlikely Phoenix comeback with 14 fourth-quarter points that sank Dallas, 112-106.

Dragic finished with 13 points, Amundson had 12, and Dudley eight.

In New York, Toronto won a fourth straight game, edging New York, 106-104.

All-Star Chris Bosh had 27 points. Hindo Turkoglu set season highs of 26 points and 11 rebounds. AP

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MANDALUYONG BET'S DAD CLAIMS HIS SON WAS SET UP

Mayoral candidate nabbed in drug bust

By Marlon Ramos and DJ Yap

ANTINARCOTICS AGENTS YESTERDAY ARRESTED a Mandaluyong City mayoral candidate after he allegedly sold cocaine to undercover operatives inside a fastfood restaurant in Pasig City.

Ernest Albert Bunn, 28, was arrested during a buy-bust operation of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) inside a McDonald's branch at the Tiendesitas shopping center around 3 a.m., said Major Sidercino Lapus, PDEA Cordillera and Ifugao-Benguet chief.

Lapus said five plastic sachets containing cocaine were seized from Bunn, who is running under the Akyat party against incumbent Mayor Benhur Abalos.

The suspect was immediately brought to the PDEA detention cell in Quezon City.

A charge for violation of Section 5 of Republic Act 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, has already been filed against Bunn, according to Lopez.

Retired Gen. Dionisio Santiago, PDEA chief, said the arrest was part of the agency's increasified campaign to arrest suppliers of illegal drugs.

Asked if the operation was proof of the reported return of metropolitan to Metro Manila, he said it was still premature to make any conclusion.

"We still don't know yet if Bunn was selling illegal drugs to local his campaign or if he was just doing it because he was a drug addict," Santiago said he.ome.

The suspect's father, Raul Bunn, however, said his son's arrest could be nothing more than a "setup" orchestrated by his political opponents.

"My son is running for mayor. He's 28, and he's running out to be high profile. You know our opponent. It seems to me like a setup. My son has always been a straight guy," he said, adding that his son's outings in the mayoralty race had improved lately.

Apart from Abalos, Bunn is facing two other candidates, Selina Benolo and Reynaldo Villeros.

According to the elder Bunn, his son told him that a friend had contacted him early yesterday morning Friday and asked him for a favor. "They met in a restaurant and then the PDEA was there," Raul said. "For me, it was a plan to get him involved."

Asked if his son knew that his friend could be carrying illegal drugs, Raul said: "I do not know that."

Bunn's mother, Angie Dominguez-Bunn, ran and lost in the incumbent mayor in the 2004 mayoral race. His uncle, Ernest "Ebbot" Dominguez, was a former Mandaluyong vice mayor who failed to win a seat in the House of Representatives the same year.

Bunn's grandfather, Ernesto Dominguez, was a former mayor of the city.

MMDA-World Bank project to reduce traffic, pollution

By Michelle V Remo

THE METRO MANILA DEVELOPment Authority said the World Bank have signed an agreement involving the implementation of a project aimed at easing traffic congestion and addressing air pollution along Edsa.

Under the "Bus Rehabilitation Project," the MMDA shall use radio frequency identification (RFID) technology in managing traffic along Edsa. Each registered public utility bus will also have an electronic tag for identification.

The technology will allow the MMDA to detect—with the help of monitors installed in selected points—unregistered buses, including public transport vehicles plying unauthorized routes. It will also allow the MMDA to detect traffic violations.

Because the use of RFID will help the MMDA detect which buses it should prohibit from plying Edsa, the number of buses is expected to be reduced once the project is implemented. The decline in the number of buses would also reduce pollution due to exhaust.

According to estimates, there are 5,000 buses—including to 1,500 "colorum" vehicles, or those that operate illegally—that contribute to traffic congestion and air pollution on Edsa.

Meanwhile, the World Bank shall purchase carbon emission-reduction credits from the MM-

MMDA 4-B

Vista Residences to top off Avant, three more residential condos

Demonstrating anew its dynamism and efficiency as the country's leader in housing construction, publicly listed property holding company Vista Land and Lifescapes is set to top off four of its residential condominium projects segment early this year, starting with Avant, a striking 38-storey glass tower at The Fort in Taguig City.

Vista Residences, the consolidated brand carrying the residential condo developments of Vista Land's all-set to top off Avant, the property group's most upscale project this Saturday, Jan 30, in a festive event at the De Jesus Oval at the Fort.

Envisioned by Vista Residences with ASYA design, and espousing the principles of green architecture, Avant stands on what is perhaps the last remaining prime location on EDSA's Crossing Park West. With its ground-breaking held only in 2008, Avant is the first Vista Residences project to be topped off in 2010, moving way ahead of its completion and turnover schedule slated for the last quarter of 2011.

Three more developments of Vista Residences are scheduled to be topped off in Makati and Manila in the next four months: Mosaic in Greenbelt , the first tower of Laureano di Trevi on Chino Roces in Makati ; and Crown Tower in Manila . A fifth project, Wil. Tower in Quezon City , will be launched early this year, with its site excavation already underway. Recently, the first tower of another project, Symphony in Quezon City , was topped off in November, 2009. Still another development, Madison Place also in Quezon City, was turned over to buyers in December, 2008.

"Vista Land, which entered the residential condo segment only three years ago in 2006, already has a line-up of 11 condo projects that are now completed, under construction, or expected to rise in the near future," said company President and CEO Jing Ejercito. This segment will continue to be a key growth area, and Vista Land is well-positioned in responding rising demand," Ms. Serrano said.

Prime sites for Vista Residences

Makati. At present, Vista Residences is offering four condominium developments in Makati : Mosaic in Greenbelt, which is the group's first residential condo; 8L Mosaic in Legaspi Village , now under construction; and Laureano de Trevi across Don Bosco on Chino Roces, with its first tower just about completed. The group has also penetrated Salcedo Village with The Gallery along LP Leviste St .

Quezon City. Adding their silhouettes to the Quezon City skyline are four developments of Vista Residences: Symphony Towers behind the GMA compound; Pine Crest in New Manila, which is undergoing construction; Madison Place in Cubao; and Wil. Tower behind ABS-CBN, which will be Vista Residences' anchor project in 2010, the brand's latest development to be launched.

Ortigas. In the vibrant Ortigas Business District, Vista Residences is the first to offer both office and residential units with the Currency on Julia Vargas Ave .

Bonifacio Global City. Availing of new opportunities in areas where condo developments are increasingly a winning proposition, Vista Residences has Avant at the Fort in Bonifacio Global City , set to top off this month.

Manila. Addressing the growing needs of halfway homes for students, the Crown Tower at the University Belt in Manila is also in the advanced phase of construction.

Housing savvy applied to condos

" Vista Land brings to residential condo developments our expertise and track record acquired from building the most number of homes of all the country's real estate companies," Ms. Serrano said. The company to date has built more than 200,000 homes all over the country.

Value proposition

With its offerings of various residential property projects ranging from the affordable to the high-end, Vista Land's total portfolio consists of 127 projects nationwide, located in 19 provinces and 42 cities and municipalities, with its geographical spread unmatched by any other local property developer.

Up to 60 percent of Vista Land buyers are overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), with the ability to overcome home acquisitions. Since it owns the most geographically diverse properties in the industry, Vista Land is able to offer projects to families of OFWs in areas of the country where its competitors are not present. The company's development locations closely mirror the geographical distribution of OFWs.

In a report dated November, 2009, Lao Venezuela of CLSA Asia-Pacific Markets said Vista Land stock has the highest potential upside, based on a price target of Php 3.04 over the next 12 months. Similarly, a report by analyst Gilbert Lopez of Credit Suisse released in October, 2009 maintained an "Outperform" rating of Vista Land . An "Outperform" rating is given if the analyst believes that the stock's total return is expected to exceed the industry average by at least 10 – 15 percent or more, depending on perceived risk, over the next 12 months. The Credit Suisse report also stated a potential upside based on a price target of Php 3.63. The report said that Vista Land remains the most attractively valued among property companies.

"With its solid fundamentals as a publicly listed group, Vista Land 's residential condo projects are part of a strategy to generate significant value-added for buyers, shareholders and property brokers, increasing our participation in the segment through the Vista Residences brand is one of our initiatives, with Avant's topping off as our latest milestone," said Ms. Serrano.

NBI issues guidelines for 'high risk' detainee Ivler

By Jeannette I. Andrade and Julie M. Aurelio

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation (NBI) has issued guidelines to ensure suspected mail-rigger killer Jason Ivler, who remains confined at the Quezon Memorial Medical Center (QMMC), is...

NBI Deputy Director for Special Investigation Services (SIS) Reuben Cheong said Ivler is considered a "high-risk detainee" because of the map he saved at the time of his capture as well as the gravity of the crime he is suspected of having committed.

Ivler was wounded and arrested in a shoot-out with NBI agents on Jan. 18 at the Quezon City home of his mother, Blue Jean Aguilar, seven months after going into hiding.

The suspect has been charged with murder for allegedly shooting Romeo Thiele Jr. during a traffic altercation along Timog Road in Quezon City last year. He was also implicated in the death of a Malabanias official in a road accident in 2004.

Aguilar was also charged with obstruction of justice for hiding her son and allegedly lying to authorities about Ivler's whereabouts.

Cheong named the guardians after talks with Aguilar and QMMC administrators, following a formal complaint to the hospital by Aguilar and the number of security personnel assigned to ensure that only an NBI agent is in a reasonable room, her considering that Ivler is a high-risk detainee. I explained to Aguilar and the QMMC that the bandmills are part of standard procedure in guarding detainees like him," he added.

Meriel Jacinto, Cheong pointed out that the bandmills could be removed if they would obstruct medical procedures on Ivler.

Under the memorandum order issued on Thursday, there must be no more than three agents on duty in the hospital room with the patient, with the door to the "private quarters" remaining open at all times.

Three operatives "must always be posted in the hallway adjacent to the patient's room," while another must be by the hospital lobby to check Ivler's visitors. The memorandum is limited to one the number of family members allowed inside Ivler's room.

In a supplemental motion, the NBI also appealed to the court to direct the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology to assume the duties of guarding Ivler at QMMC.

It pays to be honest

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

FORMER SOCIAL WELFARE and now Health Secretary Esperanza Cabral is reportedly using her office to harass a blogger who exposed the allegedly ...

...could be traced to the DSWD website.

An agent of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), accompanied by three DSWD employees, went to Tahanan Publishing in Legaspi Village, Makati City, the publisher of a book allegedly written by Ella.

The same group also allegedly went to the Parañaque residence of the Dolor family, as Cabral was reportedly convinced that Ella was a member of that family.

Cabral would also announce in a news conference that the blogger had taken back her words in a subsequent blog, which was tantamount to a public apology, the DSWD website said.

It was a lie since Ella never did that.

Last week, the NBI announced it was filing a libel case against the blogger on instructions of Secretary Cabral.

The lawsuit has a chilling effect on the blogging community.

It sends the message that online writers and commentators cannot exercise their right to free speech.

What does Cabral stand to gain by harassing the blogger who, I'm told, is 26 years old and about to get married?

The marriage is being put on hold because the family is scared of Cabral.

...

Business tycoon Dandeng Gotianqui reads his memoirs, Kwentong Buhay, next month. Some of his children, Chariz and Mark, is running San Miguel Corp., the country's biggest food conglomerate.

The man is well deserved.

When the Cojuangco clan and the crony tycoons that dominated Marcos in 1986, he remained all his companies to Ang.

At that time, the possibility of the Marcoses and Cojuangcos ever coming back to the country was very remote.

Ang and Cojuangco's fortune fell a thrifted on.

When Cojuangco came back from exile, Ang not only handed back all the companies to him, he also turned over to his boss the firms' profits in his absence, down to the last penny.

Moral of the story: It pays to be honest.

...

A contract to put up a central air-conditioning system of the Manila Central Post Office building complex in Quezon City has been awarded to a Chinese-Filipino businessman.

The project is expected to cost P1.66 million.

But you know what? The Chinese is allegedly in the air-conditioning business since he is busy running malls.

He allegedly bagged the contract because he's a friend of one of the top honchos at the House of Representatives.

Super Lotto jackpot may reach ₱100M

By Julie M. Aurelio

EXPECT LONGER LINES AT lotto outlets as the jackpot for the 6/49 Super Lotto is projected to reach P100 million before the big draw on Monday night.

This is the first time the top prize for the popular game will breach the amount this year.

"We expect the jackpot will be around P100 million by Sunday night, as longer lines are expected," said spokesperson Jo Lizzy Cedro on Friday.

There was no winner of the P90-million jackpot on Thursday night, which had a six-number combination of 09-40-47-39-30-01.

The total prize for Thursday, pegged at P90,787,626.80, has not been claimed, although there were 38,146 bettors who took home ₱7,127,700 in lotto or consolation prizes given to bettors who guess three to five numbers right.

"We advise our betting public to go to the lotto outlets early to place their bets so they can avoid the queues expected on Monday night-time," the PCSO spokesperson said.

Early this month, a lottery boy from Pandacan City took home P111 million he won during the last 6/49 Super Lotto draw for 2009, after placing P60 in bets.

The prize for the 6/49 Super Lotto draw breached the P100 million mark for times in 2009, including the P111 million jackpot in December.

In February 2009, two winners from the cities of Pasig and Caloocan shared the biggest prize in history, a whopping P340 million.

A few months later, two winners from Sta. Maria, Bulacan and Bacoor correctly guessed the winning combination and had their claim to the P186 million jackpot.

In September 2009, a 44-year-old taxi driver who bet on the 1001 was the home the P153.9 million jackpot.

The second biggest Super Lotto jackpot in history was won by a 41-year-old conservation worker from Navalichan, Quezon City, who took the P160 million prize in April last year.

Winners have a year to claim their prize. Cedro said the lucky bettors should sign their names at the back of their tickets (made of delicate thermal paper, and to ensure that these are not damaged.

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IN THIS May 11, 1953, photo, J.D. Salinger, author of Catcher in the Rye, warms up with actress Elaine Joyce to see her performance in "A Roz Re-Vu," at the Minstrels Dinner Theatre in Jacksonville, Florida. AP

Key al-Qaida leader in Iraq killed in raid

BAGHDAD—A KEY AL-QAEDA figure in Iraq involved in smuggling hundreds of suicide bombers across the border from Syria has been killed in a raid in northern Iraq, the US military said on Thursday.

The military called the death a blow to the insurgent organization in Iraq, though acknowledged it remains very much capable of carrying out well-planned, coordinated assaults with large body counts.

A series of attacks against three Iraqi cities in predawn raids on Thursday killed dozens.

Though past claims by US and Iraqi officials to have captured or killed key al-Qaida operatives have proven wrong, the US military said it had confirmed the identity of the body of the operative through fingerprints and other forensics.

The man was identified as Saad Uzeyqi Obaid Mijbil al-Shammari, also known as Abu Khalid, the military said in a statement.

Abu Ghaleb was killed on Jan. 22 during a joint US-Iraqi raid in the northern city of Mosul, some 300 km from the Syrian border. He was killed after he broke free from his restraints and attacked his guard, the military said.

He was believed to have been moving foreign fighters across the border into Iraq. He came to use a US shoulder-fired rifle that Musab al-Zarqawi, the founder of al-Qaida in Iraq.

The military said he also worked as a financier, gathering and distributing money and weapons to al-Qaida throughout the country.

Earlier this week, Gen. Raymond Odierno, the top US commander in Iraq, said intelligence indicated there were between five and 10 main insurgent leaders planning the attacks in Baghdad. AP

North Korea fires more artillery towards South

SEOUL—NORTH KOREA FIRED artillery toward a disputed sea border with its southern neighbor for the third straight day on Friday in a move seen by the South's president as a ploy by Pyongyang to put pressure on regional powers.

President Lee Myung-bak also said the South's combined overseas war exercising under UN sanctions to punish its nuclear test last year. But he added that the drills are routine and nowhere near a collapse and leader Kim Jong-il was firmly in charge.

"The Joint Chiefs of Staff reported that there were the sound of about 20 artillery rounds above North Korean waters near (the border) 'Nongnyong island,' broadcaster YTN said in a report quoted on its website.

South Korea fired hundreds of rounds of artillery this week in the direction of a disputed naval border with the South that landed in the North's waters. The firing along the heavily armed border did not result in any injuries or damage.

Lee said the North may be shooting toward US military ally South Korea to press its demands for talks on a peace deal with Washington to formally end the Korean War as a condition for it to end its yearlong boycott of nuclear disarmament negotiations.

"It's being pushed hard in some to the six-way talks, and it could be a strategy to reach a peace treaty," Lee said. "But this is simply not a very good method."

The North has demanded talks with the United States to reach a peace treaty to replace the armistice that halted hostilities in the 1950-53 Korean War, which would then allow it to sign international financial institutions he said.

The United States has said a peace treaty is only possible when the North begins to unwind, and that it can discuss the deal within the six-way nuclear talks that also include China, Japan, Russia and South Korea.

The US-led United Nations forces signed the armistice at the end of the 1950-53 Korean War with North Korea and China.

"If a peace treaty is concluded through negotiations, confidence will be built between the DPRK (North Korea) and the US to put an end to the hostile relations and give a strong impetus to the denuclearization of the peninsula," the North's ruling party newspaper said in a commentary. Reuters

'Catcher in the Rye' author J.D. Salinger dies

NEW YORK—J.D. SALINGER, the legendary author, youth hero and fugitive from time whose "The Catcher in the Rye" thrilled and helped a world he increasingly shunned, has died. He was 91.

Salinger died of natural causes at his home on Wednesday, the author's son, actor Matt Salinger, said in a statement from Salinger's longtime literary representative, Harold Ober Associates Inc. He had lived for decades in self-imposed isolation in a small, remote home in Cornish, New Hampshire.

"The Catcher in the Rye," with its immortal teenage protagonist, the twisted, rebellious Holden Caulfield, came out in 1951, a time of anxious, Cold War conformity and the dawn of modern adolescence. The Book-of-the-Month Club, which made "Catcher" a featured selection, advised that for "anyone who has ever brought up a son" the novel will be "a source of wonder and delight—and concern."

Besieged by all the "phonies" who stoke "me so depressed I go crazy," Holden soon became American literature's most famous southern since Huckleberry Finn. The novel's sales are astonishing—more than 60 million copies worldwide—and its impact incalculable. Decades after publication, the book remains a defining expression of that most American of dreams: to never grow up.

Salinger was writing for adults, but teenagers from the start identified with the novel's themes of alienation, innocence and fantasy, not to mention the lack of having the last word. "Catcher" presents the world as an ever-as-astute struggle between the goodness of young people and the corruption of others, a message that only intensified with the oncoming generation gap.

Stories from Esme Hamster's "The Blackboard Jungle" to Carrie Amendell's "Prep," movies from "Rebel Without a Cause" to "The Breakfast Club," and countless others in all songs echoed Salinger's message of kids under siege. One of the great confessors of the 1960s, Benjamin Braddock of "The Graduate," was less a blunder version of Salinger's narrator.

The cult of "Catcher" turned tragic in December 1980 when crazed fanatic Mr. Mark David Chapman shot and killed John Lennon, citing Salinger's novel holds many answers." A few months later, a copy of "Catcher" was found in the hotel room of John David Hinckley after he attempted to assassinate President Reagan. AP

Karzai predicts long Nato stay

LONDON—AFGHAN PRESIdent Hamid Karzai has warned that foreign troops must stay in his country for another decade, as world powers agreed on an exit map including a plan to persuade Taliban fighters to disarm in exchange for jobs and homes.

Afghanistan emerged between the US and its partners from Kabul's self-hegemony to offer peace to Taliban leaders who once harboured al-Qaida, instead of the more limited deal for lower-ranking fighters emphasized by the Americans.

All agree that reconciliation means bringing on board what Hank Bedwell, Nato's newly appointed civilian chief in Afghanistan, called "some pretty unsavory characters."

The conference was called to help the US and its allies find a way out of the grinding Afghan war amid stating US and Nato casualties and falling public support. Nato has agreed to accelerate the training of Afghan security forces and gradually transfer more combat responsibility to them.

"With regard to training and equipping the Afghan security forces, five to 10 years will be enough," Karzai told the BBC on Thursday. "With regard to sustaining these security Afghanistan is financially stable to provide for our forces, the time will be extended to 10 to 15 years."

The 70 nations and international organizations backed Karzai's plan to reintegrate Taliban willing to "cut ties with al-Qaida and cohort various groups and promote their political goals peacefully."

Karzai said neighboring Pakistan and Saudi Arabia—which worked together to facilitate the rise of the radical Islamist movement in the 1990s—would play a key role in the reconciliation process.

The high-level leader will convene a peace jirga—or conference—within weeks to involve Afghan leaders, members of civil society groups and clerics, Afghanistan's second-ranking foreign minister Hanspir Dastbir Spanta said.

"The starting premise is you don't make peace with your friends," US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said. "You have to be willing to engage with your enemies if you expect to create a situation that ends an insurgency." AP

Did Da Vinci paint himself as 'Mona Lisa?'

ROME—THE LEGEND OF Leonardo da Vinci is shrouded in mystery. But he did leave behind the remains buried in a French chateau really those of the Renaissance master? Plus: the "Mona Lisa" a self-portrait in disguise?

A group of Italian scientists believed they're solving those puzzles by using DNA tests to examine—and they say they are seeking permission from French authorities to dig up the body to conduct various and DNA testing.

If the skull is intact, the scientists can go to the heart of a question that has fascinated historians for years: Are the remains buried in a French chateau really those of the Renaissance master? Plus: the "Mona Lisa" a self-portrait in disguise?

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The leader of the group, Silvano Vinceti, said he plans to meet with the French Culture officials in charge of the purported burial site as Ambroise Castle early next week.

But the Italian enthusiasm may be premature.

In France, exhumation requires a long legal procedure, and precedent suggests it's likely to take even longer when it involves a person of great note such as Leonardo.

Jean-Louis Siorens, director of the medieval-era castle located in France's Loire Valley said that once a formal request is made, a commission of experts would be set up. Any such request would then be discussed with the French Ministry of Culture.

Leonardo moved to France at the invitation of King Francis I, who named him "first painter to the king." He spent the last three years of his life there, and died in Cloux, near the monarch's summer retreat of Amboise, in 1519 at age 67.

The artist's original burial place, the palace church of Saint Florentine, was destroyed during the French Revolution, and remains that are believed to be his were eventually relocated to the Saint-Hubert Chapel near the castle.

The tombstone says simply "Leonardo da Vinci", a cenotaph at the site indicates relatives they are the presumed remains of the artist, as do guidebooks. AP

THIS combination of images shows an undated self-portrait of Leonardo Da Vinci (left) and the "Mona Lisa." AP

WorldBriefs

Malaysia nabs 10 terror suspects

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysian arrest of 10 terror suspects was part of a sweep targeting the hard-line Islamic and often associated with al-Qaeda, but any ties to the Nigerian suspected in the attempted bombing of a US airliner remains unclear, a senior official said on Friday. Malaysia's home minister announced the arrests on Wednesday under the Internal Security Act, which allows indefinite detention without trial, saying they were a security threat. He declined to give further details. Activists said they included four men from Syria, two from Nigeria and one each from Yemen and Jordan. AP

Death toll at 11 in Belgian building collapse

LIEGE, Belgium—Searchers pulled two more bodies from the rubble of a collapsed apartment block in the Belgian city, raising to 11 the death toll from what is believed to have been a gas explosion. Officials said on Friday they have identified nine three victims so far. They said the force of the explosion early Wednesday that caused the five-story apartment building to collapse made it hard to identify victims. Twenty-one people were injured in the blast, two seriously. The building had only 14 registered residents. The explosion shattered windows in a wide area around the building. AP

Former French PM acquitted

PARIS—Former French prime minister Dominique de Villepin was acquitted on Thursday on charges of plotting a smear campaign against longtime rival Nicolas Sarkozy in order to sabotage his presidential bid. Villepin immediately vowed to return to the political fray, criticizing Sarkozy's policies for "not giving results" and saying he would change the government from within. Villepin (UMP party) that both were looking to be in now believed to be considering a run for president in 2012. The court ruled there were no grounds to convict the 56-year-old politician of complicity in slander. Sarkozy in 2004, when the two men were struggling to succeed president Jacques Chirac. AP

Anwar loses appeal to access to evidence

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim on Friday lost his final appeal for access to the government's evidence against him ahead of his sodomy trial due to start next week, his lawyer said. Anwar's lawyers were seeking access to evidence including DNA samples, medical reports and CCTV footage, which they say is key to disproving him with a proper defense. "The court ruled that the evidence that we were seeking did not fall within the 'necessary and desirable' categories and turned down the appeal," Anwar's lawyer Sankara Nair told AFP. Nair said they would seek a review of the Federal Court ruling next week. AP

New dinosaur fossil could provide clues to evolution

WASHINGTON—US PALEONtologists have uncovered a new dinosaur species in Obama's Cuba Dennis that could explain how one dinosaur family came to look like birds.

The findings unveils by 61 million years-the fossil record of the Alvarezsauroidea family, a group of bird-like dinosaurs with a large claw on their hands and very short, powerful arms.

It was the first evidence that this type of dinosaurs lived during the late Jurassic era, about 150 million years ago.

Halfway between birds and dinosaurs, this group—which George Washington University doctoral candidate Jonah Choiniere named Haplocheirus sollers (meaning skilful hand) in a study published in Friday's issue of the journal Science—looks a bit like today's geese-head.

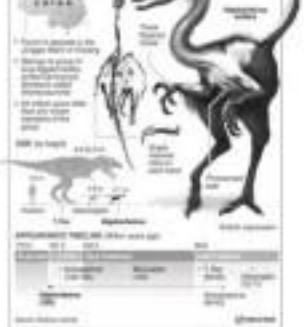
It also had a long neck and head, as well as extended, hummingbird-like limbs. The claw may have been used for digging termites.

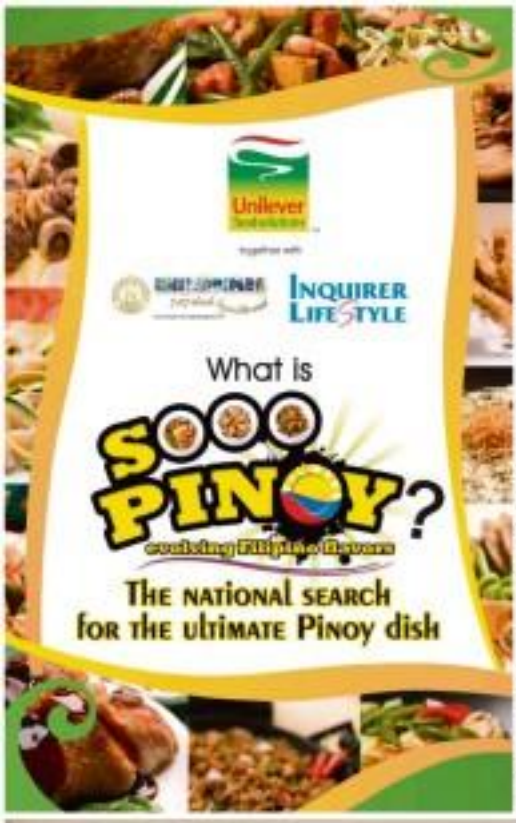
"Haplocheirus is a transitional fossil, because it shows an early evolutionary step in how the bizarre hands of later Alvarezsaurids evolved from earlier predatory dinosaurs," Choiniere said in a statement.

"The fossil also confirms our predictions that Alvarezsauridae should have been evolving in the Late Jurassic time period."

The fossil of the newly discovered species has certain features linking it to Alvarezsauridae, which included species like Mononykus (meaning one claw) and was previously thought to be a flightless offshoot of ancient birds.

But despite the Alvarezsaurid's skeletal similarities to ancient birds, Choiniere's findings showed that the dinosaur family evolved in parallel to birds and was not descended from them. AFP





Edita Lucerna B. Guzon

The WORLD

Rapists run wild among survivors

PORT-AU-PRINCE—HAITI'S POLICE CHIEF SAID ON THURSDAY that bandits were preying on vulnerable earthquake survivors, even raping women, in makeshift camps set up in the capital after the disaster.

"With the blackout that's befallen the Haitian capital, bandits are taking advantage to frustrate and rape women and young girls under the brake," national police chief Mario Andresol told reporters.

"We have more than 5,000 detainees in the streets who escaped from the National Penitentiary [the evening of the earthquake... It took us five years to apprehend them. Today they are running wild."

Isabelle Belice, who is living at large makeshift camp on the Pétionville Club Golf Course, said she thought a rape had occurred outside her tent the previous night. She said she heard men making noise until a woman struggling.

"I found a flight outside, and I saw panties on the ground," she said. "I started to shout a lot, and they left."

Figures for the number of crimes were not available but women's organizations have already detailed a number of cases and alerted the United Nations mission in Haiti, Andresol said.

His warning came a day after UN human rights chief Navi Pillay said that gangsters and child traffickers could try to exploit the chaos triggered by Haiti's devastating earthquake to ramp up their criminal activities.

The Jan. 12 earthquake killed around 170,000 people and left more than a million others homeless, many of whom are living in makeshift camps in the ruined capital.

Security was tenuous in Haiti before the 7.0-magnitude quake, but Andresol said the police force itself had been crippled by the disaster.

Andresol said the Haitian police force had only 9,000 members before the quake and that many of them were now dead or missing, adding that a large number of the remaining officers were demoralized or traumatized.

"We lost 70 police officers, nearly 500 are still missing and 400 were wounded," he said at a temporary office standing in for the capital's police headquarters, which collapsed in the quake.

The deputy head of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti, Anthony Banbury, said that desperate survivors waiting in line for the trickle of foreign aid reaching Haiti were sometimes turning violent.

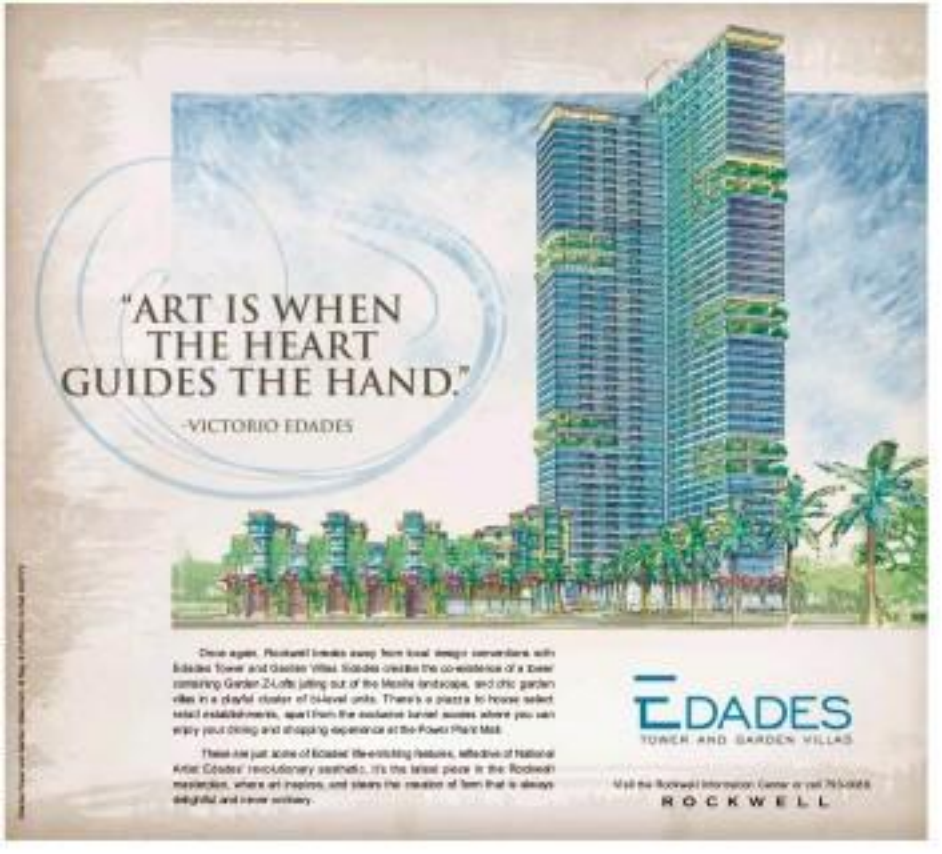
"It attracts big crowds and there can be disorder around the food distributions so it's absolutely necessary that we get enough food, enough water, enough shelter for the people, and enough security," he said.

At the Champ de Mars tent camp that skirts the crumpled National Palace, displaced residents of the quake survivors said government security was virtually absent.

"At night, people take things," said Owen Gilo, as she sweltered in Haiti's heat inside from a cut-off plastic container. "But I don't have a problem. I don't have anything to steal."

Residents said they largely fended for themselves, gathering their meager belongings into a pile at night and sleeping beside them to guard against theft.

As rumors of the sprawling camp, youths said they were banding together to protect their possessions...bags of clothes, blankets, cut batteries—and to collect garbage into piles to be burned. AFP



IN THIS ISSUE
■ Aussie firm pursues work on big Palawan oil prospect /B2

Editor Raul G. Marcelo ● Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano
BUSINESS

IN THIS ISSUE
■ 12 firms to vie for 1,200-MW Ilijan power plant /B6

5% GDP growth seen due to poll spending boost

UBS says low interest rates to spur economic activity

By Bonna W. Domingo

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY WILL GROW 5 PERcent this year, driven by a rebound in the first half due to election spending and the "lagged effects of a still loose" monetary policy, according to a Swiss investment research firm.

Edward Teather, an economist with UBS Securities, said in a report released yesterday that current monetary policy was expected to push a significant recovery in credit.

"A recovery from the weakness induced by last year's devastating storms should also help lift activity," Teather added.

UBS' forecasts are far higher than the government's projected range of 2.6 to 3.6 percent as well as market analysts' consensus of 3.0 percent.

"We believe the rebuilding effort following the storms should spur activity growth in the first half of 2010," Teather said, referring to the

It's GDP to

Indicators

Currencies

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱46.28 = $1

¥50.18 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 29, 2010

Stock Market

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(Detailed market report on Page B3)

Stocks mirror Wall St. slide

LOCAL STOCKS RESUMED THEIR DOWNtrend yesterday as the plunge on US stocks revived a three-month low, restrained risk appetite and curbed bargain-hunting.

After a brief rebound session on Thursday, the main index Philippine Stock Exchange index fell 0.45 percent or 12.08 points to close at 2,662.78.

Dealers said a weak sentiment in Wall Street spooked the local equities market, which found little incentive to sustain the modest bargain-hunting in the previous session.

This developed as US stocks tumbled after Qualcomm's lowered its sales forecast while speculation mounted that Greece could not be able to finance its budget deficit. Offshore financial markets also gave a lukewarm response to President Obama's economic comments in his State of the Union address, where he called for more efforts to create jobs and rein in record capital spending.

But the drop in the local stock market was more modest compared to the Dow Jones Industrial Average, which slumped 115.70 points (1.12 percent) on Thursday. The Indi-

STOCKS B2

Indian BPO firm eyes new facility outside Manila

By Abigail L. Ho

HINDUJA GLOBAL SOLUTIONS INC., ONE of the first Indian business process outsourcing firms to set up shop here, is preparing to venture out of Metro Manila to open another facility with at least 1,000 seats.

In an interview yesterday, HGSI Philippines president and chief executive Prabhkar Misra said the company's two facilities here, with a combined capacity of 5,000 seats, were almost completely filled up.

He said HGSI was now looking at possible locations for a new site, including Clark, Subic, Laguna, Cavite, Batangas, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Davao and Iloilo to further support the company's growth.

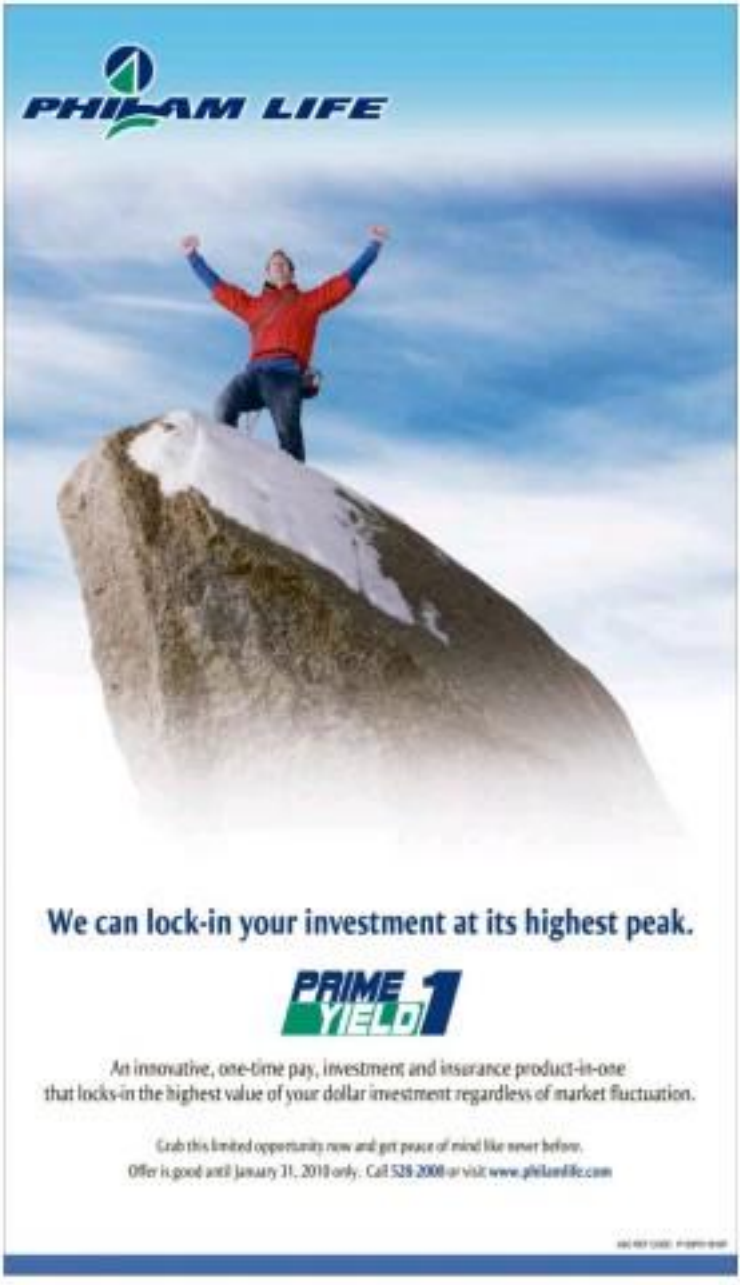
He said a decision on the new location would be made in the next few months, with the establishment of a new site to take place within the year.

While there was no final decision yet on how many seats the new site would hold, he said HGSI was not inclined to go with less than 1,000 seats.

"In our experience, [a facility with] less than 1,000 seats is not optimal. We may start with 500 seats, and then expand," he said.

For 2010, as the company's existing facilities at the ITHP, Cyberpark and Eastwood Cyberpark in Quezon City, he said HGSI would continue to focus on voice services, but would gradually bring in more non-voice services from its United States and India operations.

"We're doing mostly voice now, with non-voice services making up a small percentage. But we're considering doing more non-voice here, and we expect to sign with a US-based firm in the next three months," he related.



Aussie firm pursues work on big Palawan oil prospect

By Jerry B. Baroza

Exploratory well drilling in 2011

MUTINEER FIRM NEWS Petroleum Ltd. is set to begin next month the mid-phase 3 of its exploration activities within Service Contract 54B in offshore Palawan to identify and evaluate further prospects outside the Alsakop 3D seismic area.

The Alsakop area contains the Gindara prospect, which was seen to hold an average of 634 million barrels of "unrisked" oil-in-place. This particular prospect is also regarded by Nido Petroleum as "commercially viable to which to Shell's Malampaya field."

According to Nido, the sub-phase 1 will run over a six-month period (Feb. 5 to Aug. 4, 2010) and carry a minimum financial expenditure of $150,000.

"If 20 percent relinquishment is also required at the end of the sub-phase. The work program strategy for sub-phase 1 is on high-grade the remaining area of SC 54B for further subsurface review and, importantly, identify the area of the block to be relinquished," the company explained.

Earlier the work commitment for SC 54B, Nido is also expected to drill an exploration well by 2011.

Nido holds a 60 percent interest in SC 54B, which is the deepest exploration area—and is the field operator, while another Australian firm, Kairiki Energy Ltd., holds the remaining 40 percent.

In the last quarter of 2009, Nido reported that it continued the "maturation of the exploration prospect and lead portfolio within the Alsakop area. This work includes remapping of the Lupa-Lupa prospects and a number of smaller satellite structures in the vicinity of the large Gindara prospect."

Nido Petroleum earlier said that the Gindara has matured into an outstanding prospect and is now the highest ranked drilling candidate in the company's northwest Palawan exploration portfolio in terms of its excellent risk profile and potential significance.

The SC 54B joint venture already had extensive 2D and 3D seismic acquisition studies conducted from 2008 to 2009.

The company has proceeded to reprocess the 3D survey data to improve certainty on the structure's size and the distribution of effective reservoir within the mapped closure.

The new data allowed the joint venture to have a better estimate of potential oil in place volumes, since "reservoir risk has been substantially reduced."

PSE OKs Petron stock offering

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE (PSE) approved on Wednesday Petron Corp.'s plan to issue preferred shares to raise as much as P20 billion to help fund the oil company's major capital expenditure projects.

Petron, the country's biggest oil refiner and retailer, plans to offer 50 million preferred shares with an option to increase the offer size to up to an additional 16 million shares, which will be offered at P500 apiece.

According to the proposed timetable of the offering, the final offer price will be set on Feb. 9. The offer period will start on Feb. 15 and end on Feb. 26. Shares are targeted to be listed on the local bourse on March 5.

The preferred shares are cumulative, nonvoting, nonparticipating, nonconvertible and perpetual-denominated, with a par value of P1 a share and redeemable at the option of the company. These will also have preference over common shares in the case of the dissolution of the company.

The PSE approval, however, is subject to a number of conditions. The PSE said Petron should submit to the exchange, within two trading days prior to the start of the offer period, the Securities and Exchange Commission-certified true copy of the certificate of permit to offer securities for sale and registration and licensing order.

Petron has also been directed to ensure transparency in the use of the proceeds through the submission of several disclosures.

The joint issue managers and bookrunners for the planned issuance are ING Capital and Investment Corp., BPI Capital Corp. and PNB Bank N.V. Manila branch.

"Proceeds from the preferred share issuance will be mainly used for capital expenditures for the company's refinery operations and the expansion of its retail network," Petron president Ildefonso D. Bocin said in a statement.

Jerry B. Baroza

PLDT subscribers hit 41M in 2009

By Paolo G. Montecillo

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE Telephone co. (PLDT) likely met its profit goals for last year due to its expanding subscriber base both in telephone and broadband services, the company's chief executive said.

PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan said the firm ended last year with more than 41 million subscribers, cementing the firm's dominance as the country's leading telecommunications firm.

"They gave us the preliminary figure for 2009, we're likely to meet our core income guidance of P46 billion," Pangilinan said.

If met, the company would increase its net profit base by 2.5 percent from the year-ago level.

The company said it expected to continue to expand its network, particularly in the broadband Internet space.

"We plan to make significant investments for our broadband network," Pangilinan said. He said the company would spend about P28 billion this year, slightly higher than PLDT's P27 billion outlay in 2009.

For the company said its broadband subscriber base had reached 1.6 million as of end last year. Smart Broadband PLDT's mobile phone subscribers topped 41 million in the same period.

In comparison, its biggest rival mobile-tel tycoon Telecom Inc. has about 23 million mobile subscribers. Globe-spun-off mobile brand Inc. Cellular has less around 10 million subscribers.

PLDT, the country's largest company in terms of market, Hong Kong-based First Pacific Holdings Ltd. and Japan's NTT Do-CoMo.

The firm's share price yesterday rose to P2,870 a piece, or 0.56 percent higher than the previous close of P2,855.

5% GDP growth seen ...

From page B1

damage inflicted by weather disturbances "Ondoy" and "Pepeng."

"Non-government election related spending by candidates ahead of the May 2010 elections should also boost activity," he said.

The National Economic and Development Authority based on a study of the 2007 elections, estimates that candidates' spending pushes domestic output growth by 0.04 percentage point.

Teather said that without a boost from election spending, and the economy recovers as it has in the past 10 years, growth in 2010 would settle at 3.1 percent.

Also, Teather said global demand indicators revealed negative signs of weakness and a near-term recovery in export and manufacturing.

These will, in turn, hinder domestic consumer spending, which grew 5.1 percent year-on-year in the fourth quarter of 2009, and private investment, which dropped 1.6 percent.

10 members join BancNet in 2009

Ten new members joined ATM consortium BancNet in 2009, cementing its position as the largest electronic banking consortium in the country with 58 members. BancNet is also the only multi-bank, multi-channel payment gateway in the country.

The new members include three banks that moved from another network - Philippine National Bank (PNB), Equitable Banking Bank and Maybank Phils. The other are Citibank, Bank of Commerce, Wealth Bank, Entrepreneur Bank, Optimum Development Bank, Rural Bank of Dolloj, Dubai St. Anthony Cooperative, and Rizal Multi-purpose Cooperative.

BancNet's network grew by 28.88% to almost 6,000 ATMs nationwide, also the largest in the country. PNB contributed 600 ATMs to this growth.

Upon joining the consortium last year, PNB president Omar Byron Mier said "Our depositors can now start availing transactions of BancNet's services particularly debit card shopping in partner's stores, free ATM card and online filing and payment of SSS contributions and loan payments".

The new members boosted the number of BancNet ATM cardholders which reached 4.4 million at present 2009, increasing by 1.6 million or 22.86%. The three ATM networks have a combined cardholder base of 23.7 million.

A record number of switched transactions were registered last December 23 at 1.86 million. These are intra-network and interchange balances inquiry and withdrawal transactions that passed through the BancNet switch. Total volume of switched transactions during the year rose 40.1% to 286.6 million compared to 1998.

BancNet also expanded its payment terminal network to 11,400 terminals in 7,000 locations. Other retail payment terminals by partner banks can pay using their ATM cards. They can also pay their bills to 76 merchants either through the ATM, www.bancnetonline.com, or their mobile phones.

According to BancNet president Francisco Eugenio, Jr. "BancNet continues to grow because of its passion to innovation which is behind the development of the wide range of services that its members and cardholders enjoy. We always explore ways to make banking easier and more convenient for our customers. Those are the reasons why we always are our edge over the other competitors."

"For instance, last year, we enabled our ATM cardholders to pay their Cebu Pacific and Philippine Airlines booking online using their ATM cards. Before, only credit cards were accepted online. Soon they will also be able to online and pay for goods and services using their mobile phones," he added.

Stocks ...

From page B1

heavy trading index and the Standard & Poor's 500 also lost 1.91 percent and 1.16 percent, respectively.

Despite the overall drop in the local market, there was some modest bargain hunting that benefited bellwether PLDT as well as Alliance Global Group Inc., First Philippine Holdings Corp. and Metro Pacific Investments Corp.

Trading in the overall index was thin, with investors still cautious ahead of the release of the fourth quarter gross domestic product (GDP) report on Feb. 5.

Analysts said the market could remain choppy in the near term as investors continue to digest the impact of the government's decision to raise the reserve requirement ratio of banks by 1 percentage point.

Meanwhile, the peso closed at P46.50 against the dollar, weaker than its P46.40 finish on Thursday.

Dollar volume totaled $1.2 billion, with foreigners accounting for 53 percent of the total.

Net foreign selling reached $19.6 million.

Gainers outnumbered losers, 98 to 82, while 41 issues were unchanged.

Cross over to the 2010 Honda CR-V

Honda Cars Philippines, Inc. (HCPI) officially announces the arrival of the 2010 CR-V. Radiating urbane styling, bold stance and world-class performance, the new CR-V lets you cross over to life's different adventures. It ably goes well with various lifestyles and keeps up with the demands of modern living. The 2010 CR-V is an embodiment of the fine things life has to offer.

When the arrival of the new CR-V was first declared last December, a total of 200 customers have already placed reservations just be referring to released photographs and without even seeing the actual unit yet.

Heeding the call for continuous advancement in these fast paced times, the new CR-V lets you move into the realm of urban sophistication with its new two step front grille with honeycomb design, refreshed bumpers and alloy wheel designs. Its new styling blends perfectly with the CR-V's clear-cut lines and over-all premium finish for a more refined and tougher look.

The interior also presents an added air of elegance with dual-tone black and silver color scheme, new seat fabric design for the 2.0 liter variant and stylish black leather seats with grey-stitch accents for the 2.4 liter model.

Experience an improved sedan-like comfort and performance, excellent safety features and great fuel efficiency benefits with the 2010 CR-V.

Committed in bringing new values in its products and services, Honda adjusted the CR-V's suspension system for better handling and comfort. A more serene drive can also be expected with the additional seals and insulators applied for the improvement of NVH (Noise, Vibrations and Harshness) levels. These improvements simply make your CR-V experience safer, more comfortable and pleasurable.

Having the safety of passengers as top priority, the CR-V still comes with dual SRS and side airbag, with OPDS (Occupant Position Detection System), which intelligently detects weight, height, and positioning of the front passenger to identify whether to deploy the airbags or no. Meanwhile, its body is designed with the unique G-CON technology that provides an impact-absorbing structure to reduce injuries to driver, passengers and even pedestrians. The G-CON technology has been tried out at Honda's real world car-to-car test facility which happens to be the world's first indoor omni-directional crash test safety facility.

Every Honda possesses advanced technologies that deliver spirited driving with reduced impact on the environment. The 2010 CR-V continues to generate 170 ps at 6800 rpm of maximum power for the 2.4 i variant and 150 ps at 6200 rpm for the 2.0 i variant with its i-VTEC engine technology. With its cutting-edge engine technology, the CR-V performs promising fuel economy and clean emissions that meet EURO 4 levels. Easy tracking of one's fuel consumption is also made possible with the fuel economy and range indicators available in the liquid crystal display of the instrument panel.

Back in 2007 when the third generation CR-V came in, it successfully introduced the crossover concept in the local market. The third generation CR-V quickly captured the discriminating taste of the market and generated cumulative sales of almost 9,000 units, making it the number one compact SUV in the local scene.

Sold in 160 countries throughout North America, South America, Europe, Asia and China, the CR-V has successfully created a name in sedan-like comfort and performance, ample SUV space and stylish design. From 2007-2008, the third generation CR-V is the consistent best-selling SUV in North America, also placing it among the top 10 best selling vehicles within the said period.

The 2010 CR-V comes in three variants with introductory prices:

2.0 V MT 2WD Php 1,275,000
2.0 V AT 2WD Php 1,325,000
2.4 S-X AT 4WD Php 1,525,000
2.4 S-X AT 4WD
(Brilliant White Pearl) Php 1,545,000

The new CR-V also comes in posh colors to match your modern lifestyle:

Urban Titanium
Crystal Black
Taffeta White (2.0 i variant only)
Sparkle Grey (2.0 i variant only)
Polished Metal (2.4 i variant only)
Brilliant White Pearl (2.4 i variant only)

Cross over to the new Honda CR-V. We have prepared open houses and other exciting activities for you to get to know more about the CR-V's sophisticated styling and no-nonsense performance.

For more details, you may visit any of Honda's 26 authorized dealerships all over the country or check out **www.crossovercrv.com** and **www.hondaphil.com**.

BUSINESS

12 firms to vie for 1,200-MW Ilijan power plant

By Amy S. Remo

AT LEAST 12 COMPANIES ARE expected to bid for the management of an independent power producer administrator contract covering the 1,200-megawatt Ilijan natural gas-fired power plant in Batangas, according to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.

Cornel Valentino, PSALM vice president for steamship trading, said the companies already submitted letters of interest for the IPPA contract. He however declined to name the prospective companies.

In separate text messages to the business, Sun Miguel Corp. president Ramon S. Ang and Aboitiz Power Corp. president Emmanuel Aboitiz both confirmed that their respective companies would bid for the contract.

Also, the Lopez-led First Gen Corp. and the Ayala-Aboitiz Power Corp. Bigpost earlier expressed interest in acquiring the right to manage the combined capacities of the Ilijan facility.

Only those investors that have submitted letters of interest will be allowed to participate in the bid.

PSALM had scheduled the bidding process on April 16. Prospective investors may conduct due diligence from Jan. 18 until two business days prior to the submission deadline. A pre-bid conference will be held on Feb. 11.

During the investors' forum held last Tuesday, Valentino said that PSALM would bid out the Ilijan capacity as a single IPP PA contract.

PSALM president Jose Emmanuel Eser said that they had considered breaking up the management of the contracted capacity for the Ilijan facility into several smaller contracts and offer these to a number of prospective firms.

Duterte explained that this was meant to prevent a single power firm from dominating the market.

It was also intended to make the facility financially viable since the contract for the Ilijan plant, with its huge capacity, would have been too expensive for a single company to acquire.

Completed in 2002, the Ilijan power plant is operated by Napocor through a build-operate-transfer contract, that will expire in 2022.

PSALM to bid out facility as single IPPA contract

Investments expected to pour in '10

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER GETTING HUGE INVESTments from large foreign firms last year despite the recession, the Department of Trade and Industry is confident that the country will get more industries this year in the global economy has already started to recover.

The country last year welcomed the entry of Japanese firm Sumitomo Metal Mining Co., Thai company Charoen Pokphand Foods, and Kuwait's Al Khaneli Group through subsidiary Al-Mal Investment Co.

These committed investments totaled around P9.19 billion.

"Investor confidence in the Philippines continues to be strong with the recent entry of additional investments geared from several global conglomerates. The decision of these companies to invest is a clear indication that the Philippines remains to be one of Asia's investment destinations of choice," Trade Secretary Peter Favila said in a statement.

The biggest among last year's committed foreign investments was that of Japan's 60% Nikkei Corp., a joint venture between Nikkei Asia Corp. and Sumitomo for a P62.7 billion nickel-cobalt mixed sulfides production project.

Thailand's CP Foods, on the other hand, will set up a P3.4-billion aqua feed mill plant in Cagayan, Tarlac. The Al Khaneli Group's Al-Mal had likewise committed to invest $1.2 billion for the development and expansion of the Subic Municipal International Airport in Clark Field, Pampanga.

Pag-IBIG to pay out P8.5B in '09 dividends

By Bernard W. Dionisio

THE PAG-IBIG FUND IS GIVING out P8.5 billion in dividends for 2009—28 percent more than the payout made in 2008, according to Vice President Nedi de Castro.

De Castro, who chairs the agency's board of trustees, said it is announced that the increase was the biggest in the 29-year history of Pag-IBIG Fund, formally known as the Home Development Mutual Fund.

"The 2009 dividend comprises 71 percent of the fund's P12-billion net income" for the year, de Castro said. "This will be proportionately credited to the total accumulated savings of members, who number more than 7.4 million throughout the country."

Under the law that created Pag-IBIG Fund, the agency must set aside at least 70 percent of its net income for a given year as dividends. The dividend is tax-free.

In 2009, Pag-IBIG posted a net income of P12.6 billion, also a record for the agency.

According to Pag-IBIG chief executive Jaime A. Fullarlia, the increase in dividends and net income was due to "more effective collection procedures and prudent fund management."

Dividend payouts have been rising over the past five years, from P4.48 billion in 2004.

Also, de Castro said the fund set a record-level of P498 billion in benefits granted to members in 2009.

The amount covers P49 billion in short-term multipurpose and calamity loans, provident claims as well as death benefits—higher by 60 percent than P310 billion in 2008.

In voluntary briefing above, Pag-IBIG disbursed P6.8 billion to 869,800 eighteen-sixteen members.

Also, the agency granted P30-billion in multipurpose loans to 1.7 million members.

Moreover, Pag-IBIG last year extended P45.7 billion worth of long-term housing loans to more than 74,000 members.

These figures represent "the highest total loan amount and the biggest number of borrowers for a single year in the fund's history" de Castro said.

Miss chief

BREAK TIME
Comrades & Kasual III

WHAT MISCHIEF ARE THEY up to this time?

Rumors at the Palace are insisting the Lola can actually appoint the next Supreme Court (SC) Chief Justice sans prior clearance.

The issue erupted recently after some groups pointed out that the President could not legally make such an appointment 45 days before the presidential elections.

That is part of the Constitution, written in plain language, easy for the guys down here in my barangay to understand. It is not work-it-unless.

Such a ban starts on March 27 (this year, and is supposed to that Chief Justice Renato Puno retires on May 17, or a full week after the 2010 elections.

By that time, assuming that the elections push through, we would have elected a new president.

The new president will assume the position to be vacated by the Lola on June 30, so the Lola will still be president when Puno leaves.

That is why the bosses of the new administration are willing to the idea that the Lola may still appoint the next chief justice no matter what.

Down here in our barangay, we thought that any president would have 90 days to fill up any vacancy in the Supreme Court, as provided for in the Constitution.

Doomsday scenarios now favor the political landscape. Most suggest that, if the Lola were to leave the position vacant even for a minute, and the Supreme Court were to function without a chief justice, then there would be economic and political chaos.

Hmmm ... and we do not have that already?

ANYWAY, Bro. Marcia Dotterson, who sits in the Judicial and Bar Council in response the House, wrote Puno to move for the council to start the selection process right away and for the council to submit the nominees to the Lola pronto.

Dotterson is one of those who have painted a grave and perilous scenario.

Perhaps it has not occurred to him that a "hold-right appointment" by this rum administration could precisely put us to that situation.

If the Lola were to go ahead with the appointment, this could lead to all sorts of legal attacks from various sources.

This may be the actual intention—that situation may be much worse than the Dotterson scenario.

What are they up to this time?

Surveying another Kinot upbeat that the Lola could actually make the appointment from out of the list to be submitted by the JBC.

The key therefore is the JBC list. If the JBC would include the list, the Lola would have no worries whatsoever.

Coincidentally, Dotterson is painting a doomsday scenario to press the JBC to make the list without delay.

They have all miles covered, right? Their fingers are good!

HK-based company to boost satellite coverage in Subic

By Paolo G. Montecillo

A HONG KONG-BASED firm will pour $5 million in to Subic Bay over the next two years to put Filipinos at the helm of up to five satellites that can cover most of the globe.

Asia Broadcast Satellite (ABS), which recently acquired Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) unit Mabuhay Satellite Corp., said it planned to turn the local firm's Subic facility into a world class satellite operating hub.

"The acquisition of Mabuhay is very strategic ... because of the many synergies it creates in combining Mabuhay's range of applications, operational expertise and business relationships with our former growth and long-term objectives," ABS president Jose Chui said in a statement.

"Our main satellite uplinking center will be located in the Philippines."

Chui said the investment would fund the expansion of the Subic facility and the acquisition of more up-to-date equipment to make operations more efficient.

He said the Subic facility, which operates the country's lone satellite Agila-2, would be improved to enable it to control up to five satellites.

ABS will add Agila-2 to its current fleet of three satellites, covering Asia, Russia, Africa and the Americas.

The company also plans to build an additional satellite, worth $200 million, to add to its current fleet.

With the acquisition, ABS gains Mabuhay's current customers including Bayan Telecommunications, Globe Network and Oceans Cable.

But on its own, ABS also offers network services mostly to broadcast and telecommunications companies in Europe, Asia, Africa and the United States.

ABS said the company chose to acquire the local firm due to its low cost of maintaining operations while providing world class services.

The merger of the two companies was the result of PLDT's sale of its 67-percent stake in Mabuhay, which the telecom giant announced in November of last year.

Mabuhay, which was incorporated in 2004, is the first Philippine company to send and run a communications satellite.

PBSP inducts new corporate members

By Daniel L. Lucas

ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S largest umbrella organizations for corporate charity work yesterday increased its ranks as it admitted several new firms as part of its 20th anniversary celebrations.

According to the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), its 17 new members bring its total tally of corporate partners to 255.

Some of the foundation's new members that join are from the Visayas, including the Hagdonan bus, the Golden Prince Hotel and the Bohol Resort Development Corp., which have all been incorporating environment-friendly systems in their businesses.

The other four are Globaland Singkaw Real Inc., Hi-rani Corp., Equitea, Petrogenic & Associates, and Bonanza Publishing.

PBSP, the Philippines' autonomous chain Cibo Inc., the subsidiary of Hot Lit (M&H Food Corp.) and CEO Foodphone have also formalized their commitments to corporate citizenship by signing up to membership.

Batangas City-based rural bank Bangko Kabayan, Bioenergy, TSM Shipping (Phils.) Inc., Philpacific Ironmen Brokers and Insurance Inc. and Sagittarius Mines Inc. also joined the organization.

Cemmenig Food Inc. the local licensee of US restaurant chain Lollypop Burkers, also joined PBSP on its first year of doing business in 2009.

Touring the group's foundation day celebrations yesterday, chair Wilfred Pangilinan emphasized PBSP's advocacy to integrate civic activities into their respective core businesses and apply business solutions to help alleviate poverty.

PBSP said that the fight against poverty is now more urgent than ever with three in ten Filipinos still classified as "poor."

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PROPERTY
Editor Cesar D. Mangosong

8 tips for feng-shui-friendly homes

By Tessa R. Salazar

THERE MUST REALLY BE something about the mystical practice of geomancy (or feng shui) that makes even the most cynical take heed. Why would the country's biggest developers include feng shui in their must-consult list (along with the science-based consultants like geologists and architects), if it were all just talk about seemingly inane life-element connections?

Inclusive Property recently visited one of the most sought-after international promenades whose chimes include top builders in Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong and other booming locations of note. Hong Kong-based master Joseph Chau, Manchule Oriental Manila's resident geomancer since 2000, is consulted by a slew of developers that are a veritable Who's Who in the Philippine property landscape. And, shall we say, his word is their sermon blueprint to every real estate undertaking.

Master Chau's first statement as inclusive Property settled down for an interview: "2010 is the year of the Gold en Tiger. Metal Tiger is strong. Golden Tiger is positive. Metal tiger is the yin tiger. We don't have a yin tiger in the zodiac sign."

INTERNATIONAL promenader Joseph Chau will grace Manchule Oriental Manila's New Year's Eve Celebration on Feb. 13. Lunar-last dinner will be preceded by an auspicious ritual by the internationally renowned geomancer, plus a Chinese dance performance at the ballroom.

He warns us: Be not misled by those false prophets: "When they say (Metal Tiger), we know they are non-qualified. They are wrong." He said that before consulting a feng shui expert, the public should know his or her background or look at their clients if they are, indeed, doing good in their businesses.

Master Chau admitted that it is not cheap to find, and consult, an authentic feng shui expert. But as every expat, tycoon or business mogul will attest, keeping a genuine find close at hand is well worth it. So those who are just starting to align their lives and abode with the guidance of feng shui, here are eight general rules for 2010 to make your feel right at home.

1 Trust yourself. The moment you enter the house, you should feel comfortable. Your first impression should be a basis. If you don't like it, if you have a negative feeling, it's not built for you. The energy inside may not be your match.

2 Make sure there's enough morning sunshine—not the sunset. The house should not face the west. If the sunset directly enters the house, it's not a good sign. Chau said this is also a position up where owners would be too warm for the occupants, and would be a big burden for the air-conditioning unit.

3 The lack of light isn't good either. If the house inside is too dark, that means there's too much negative energy inside. If so, sunshine penetrates the house, it's not lucky.

4 Bring or carry a child inside. If the child feels comfortable at once and starts to run and play, that means the house is lucky. If the child becomes scared or moody, something is wrong with the house.

5 Another way would be to bring a tortoise or turtle. If it becomes active once inside, then that house would bring you luck.

6 For those who have inherited properties and cannot move, revise or change, according to feng shui guidelines, there are "lucky charms" to counteract the negative elements and positions.

7 Put an altar on the side, not inside the bedroom. "Filipinos make the common mistake of placing their saints inside their bedrooms. This is not good. The bedroom is for sleeping and for (making) love."

8 For those who have saved enough money to remodel a feng shui expert, consult the geomancer first before the architect to avoid double expenses. Chau said there have been instances where the owners find out that their finished house was not in accordance to what the feng shui expert recommended.

Next week: Master Chau makes feng shui calculations

When fibers become super fabrics

DESIGN DIMENSIONS

Isabel Hernandez-Asensio

REMEMBER ELROY JETSON? THE designing chica who consumed superhero aesthetics in the animation film "The Incredibles"? She is one fictional character whose job may just be all too easy in this age of 21st century science. As it turns, we will understand why.

For like-us lovers of interior furnishings, one thing is certain: upholstery rules. Proper measuring and contouring of furnishing pieces are not at all possible without the use of form-contoured and upholstery-clad **furniture**. Soft **surfaces** may sometimes be used to glorify **other** seating is not predesigned to **enhance** muffle a too-high to justify maintaining soft upholstery. Think **elegant** wedding chairs and the bench seat of your public commuter train. But for long rides and many hours of weighing down on your bottom, our **accustomed** sofa for the **comfort** of a flexible and pliable surface.

Earliest use of upholstery

The earliest use of upholstery material dates back hundreds of years ago when a variety of grasses and animal skin were used to soften sleeping and seating surfaces. For the first few thousand years of industrialized humanity, there were only four basic fibers that the world used to produce textile: flax or linen, cotton (which was very popular in ancient Egypt), wool and silk. Those fabrics were produced in varying textures and colors. The finer and more colorful the material, the more expensive the raw- Manufacturing techniques also made it possible to combine fibers to create hundreds of different types of materials, varying mainly by their fiber content, weight, style of weave and final surface finish.

In the early 1900s the first synthetic fibers were made. By combining different organic fibers and chemical components, synthetic fibers have developed into fabrics with a variety of properties. Those is the first generation of super fabrics.

Artificial silk was developed in the form of rayon, the first manufactured fiber developed from natural sources. Then came cuprammonium rayon which is one of the most widely used fiber for upholstery fabric. Fibers polyurethane was invented, it spun off a novel type of elastomeric fiber known periodically as spandex, a stretchable fabric that is able to snap back like natural rubber.

When polyester was was introduced, it was and still is, the magical inexpensive fabric that doesn't crumple. Often blended with cotton or other natural fiber, it is the most widely used fiber for upholstery today. More recently, the biggest contributor to the appeal of polyester is the discovery of microfibers and the development of ultrasuede, which has an im-

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SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Mangosing

Life-changing moment

By Charles E. Bahay

FOR LENORE CONCIO, HER transfer frame was never a source of discrimination. In fact, at 5 feet 10 inches and over 200 kilos people stayed from with awe and respect.

That helped boost his confidence, even managing to graduate salutatorian in grade school while earning excellent marks by the time he finished a college course in the mean de Manila University (in fact, Conco is on his way of completing his combined five-year MBA and Law courses).

"Good food has always been a passion of our family. Meal times are a great way for us to get together and much base with the day's events. But this also led to overeating. I even remember a time when I could eat till the rice in the rice cooker, then to eight pieces of pork chops and more than two liter-size bottles of soft drinks per meal with iced tea on the side," Conco recalled.

He also added that he would eat several times a day, aside from the regular meals. I also take snacks in between as well as midnight snack.

215 kilos

At his heaviest, he tipped the scale at 233 kilos. But despite his hefty frame, he still finds time to be active in sports like badminton.

"I was never sluggish. But sometimes getting active and being on the heavy side will take its toll eventually," he said.

And moment of reckoning came in January 2006. During an annual round of medical examinations, Conco just blanked out five minutes into the game.

That incident somehow "forced" Conco to reconsider his situation. He went to St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City where he talked to Dr. Eduard Oliveros, a bariatric surgeon and key opinion leader of Allergan Health (www.metabolicsynchronization.com/www.laplapbanda.com), a multispecialty healthcare company focused on discovering, developing and commercializing innovative pharmaceuticals, biologics and medical devices including obesity intervention.

74.2 BMI

"When I met Conco, his body mass index was already 74.2, which puts him in the super obese category (having a BMI greater than 50). Remember that the ideal BMI is between 18.5 and 22.9 for Filipinos, as you have an idea how much Conco was over the mark," Oliveros said.

The BMI is used to determine the level of obesity by dividing the person's weight in kilograms by his height in meters squared. Filipinos with a BMI of more than 23 are considered overweight, those who go over 25 falls under Obese 1 while those who go over 30 are already classified as Obese II.

"It's interesting to note that Asians are more susceptible to obesity complications such as Type 2 diabetes, even among younger percents, because they usually have a higher level of body fat, and a lower level of muscularity for every level of BMI compared to Caucasians. This means a Filipino with a BMI of 27.5 will now be at risk of developing medical problems," Oliveros explained.

Today of the more than 1 billion people worldwide who are overweight, 300 million are considered obese. Here in the Philippines, of the estimated 9 million Filipinos suffering from obesity, 600,000 are morbidly obese.

Of this number, an estimated 135 million obesity sufferers seem to develop serious health problems such as diabetes, infertility, irregular menstrual cycle, polycystic ovarian syndrome, heart disease, stroke, sleep apnea, hypertension, severe knee and back pain, cancer and metabolic syndrome than many obese sufferers unsophisticated health.

More complicated

Conco' problem is much more complicated as he already needed drastic measures to trim his already massive weight.

"He had a number of choices which are more or less equally safe and effective. However, he chose the one that is regarded as less invasive and only thins some other types of weight loss surgeries—Lap Band surgery," Oliveros said.

The surgery involves banning of a gastric band around the upper portion of the stomach like a belt. The patient will only have few tiny incisions of around.

A month after the surgery at St. Luke's he lost 18 kg. These days, Conco weighs 102 kg and sports a 36-inch waistline.

"That incident is the fundamental cause why life-changing. I still enjoy my food although at much less serving. Before, I could only fit into an XLV. Now I could take a Xtora shirt. And best of all I can now wear most belts," laughed Conco.

Former health secretary's alternative party

By Tessa H. Salazar

CREATIVITY CAN MAKE ONE SPIN AN otherwise boring, drab vegetarian food into a tempting yummy meal dressing.

Just recently, former health secretary Dr. Juan Ponce Enrile, a health advocate, revealed to raccoon health that, after retirement, many hospitals in the Philippines, the highest incidence of diabetes and strokes and strokes (the "brain attack") happened during and immediately after the holidays. He then observed that the Filipino holiday fare was almost always based on meat and processed meat products, and that those partygoers consumed more in excessive amounts.

He shared his own family's holiday or birthday treat that is called Inn-nabe-Tanabe Filipino, fresh pineapple and sinigang-a juice mixed with fresh turmeric juice; fresh cucumber and dalandan juice mixed with fresh ginger juice; tofu barbecue; whole wheat vegetable noodles (lasagna, pan, spaghetti, soup) with pesto sauce and pili nuts.

The side dishes are seaweed lumpia with Ayang dilaw (Curcuma longa) and talap kabol (Centella asiatica); seaweed papaya with coconut vinegar and coconut sugar and dalun ng pili and sliced red gumamela flowers.

His desserts include Pinoy fruit and Nut Salad with whipped cream cream; Tahu with sago in coconut sugar syrup; choice of Hot tablea with cardamom and honey; Hot Tsaang Gubat (Carmona cuneata) with yerba buena (mint) and balanoi (sweet basil); and Hot tablea chocolate with sago pith and coconut sugar.

Pinoy Fruit and Nut Salad

Ingredients

Chopped pineapples, banana, papaya, melon and mango (if possible with thin slices of guava and balimbing)

Nata de pili, peanuts, cashew and coconut cream threads

Whipped coconut cream

Agar-agar powder (optional)

For toppings: 7 to 10 pieces of basil leaves and 2 tablespoonfuls of sambong flowers

Mix all ingredients and fold with whipped coconut cream. Top with basil leaves and sambong flowers. Chill and serve.

"The more we use vegetables, fruits, nuts, lentils and whole grains in daily basis, our entire body, mind and spirit feel better and full of wellness," Enrile has said.

PINOY fruit and nut salad

DINUGUAN Filipino

He added: "Fresh fruits and raw vegetables eaten every day energize our blood, lymph, nerves and nervous our resistance to disease, depression and degeneration."

"Celebration like birthday parties should make us healthier and full of joy, it is the best time of the year for love, giving and forgiveness and healing," he quipped.

Dra. Maria M. Salazar Yu, Enrile's daughter who owns The Natural Shelf Health Products, said www.thenaturalshelf.com offers more information on the healthy recipes. Site visitors can also get in touch with the former health secretary via the website.

In corporate interviews, Mary Meona, director and proprietress of Old Mexico's vegetarian foods, said the United States (in which the Filipino' heavy meat-eating diet is based) is now undergoing a shift from a meat-based diet to a meatless one. She further noted, however, that the world's most powerful nation still has a long way to go nutrition-wise since those who have chosen to go meatless are still heavy dairy consumers. "They now consume more necessarily cheese (in pizza, for instance)," Meona quipped.

Presidential candidates speak on health issues

CAN AN ALERT NATION PREDICT? If not, what do our presidential aspirants believe they should do to address key healthcare issues plaguing the nation?

Based on the Philippine Family Income and Expenditures Survey, almost 70 percent of the population could not afford to pay for healthcare services due to their low income and high cost of medical care. Inequities in healthcare provision is glaring, lack of manpower to reach regional levels, and the exodus of healthcare professionals continues.

It has been the perception of many doctors and health workers that the government has not shown

so much conviction and commitment as aggressively offering solutions to address the crises—it boasts that have plagued the healthcare situation.

From one administration to another, the same issues remain in the list with seemingly half-hearted efforts to resolve them.

The top five presidential candidates in the May elections have been invited to respond their plans and ideas on how to address these healthcare issues during the opening plenary session of the 15th joint annual convention of the Philippine Society of Hypertension and Philippine Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society at the Crowne Plaza Galleria (Manila) Hotel's Feb. 18. The forum is slated from 9 to 11 a.m.

Most concrete, doable plan

More than 1,000 registered delegates consisting of cardiologists, endocrinologists, neurologists, nephrologists, internists and other medical specialists will listen to the presidential candidates' 15-minute presentations and how they answer questions from a distinguished panel of current and past presidents of the forty societies including Health Secretary Jaime Galvez.

Doctors and other healthcare professionals will also attend the forum, which aims to assess who among the presidential hopefuls has a most concrete and doable plan, and a most sincere intention to implement it beyond an impressive rhetorical display.

The serious imbalances in the distribution of major healthcare resources in the country is already alarming. Most provinces have very limited medical facilities and health professionals manning them. This is partly due to the preference of both the patients and public service providers to locate in urban areas. The government has also provide a chronic compensation for those workers to make them stay in underserved areas. Despite the exodus of many health workers, the desire to live a decent life and provide for the needs of their respective families have to be reasonably met.

Some data show that more than 80 percent of all healthcare facilities are located in towns with almost half of them in the National Capital Region. Roughly only 10 percent of the country's doctors, dentists, pharmacists, 20 percent of medical technicians, and 35 percent of nurses are practicing in the rural areas. Ironically, even our national health insurance program ends up devoting much of its resources reimbursing healthcare facilities and providers in the more developed areas.

Tighter control

Last year, the Philippine government has shown its intention to re-establishing a tighter control on medical facilities and prices of essential medicines through the Anti-Hospital Detention Law and the Cheaper Medicines Law.

Lately, time and again, we've invested in this column that these laws will probably help the upper 20 to 30 percent of the population but will remain meaningless for the much bigger majority for whom a trip to the hospital or drugstore confronts them with a dilemma whether to do the required laboratory exams and buy the prescribed medicines, or to buy food for their family for the next several days. In the end, a grumbling stomach prevails over an aching heart or a swollen joint.

Obviously, the government has to take firm steps, not reminders now, to exploit healthcare financing programs that offer a higher and a more expanded support value. Our Philhealth and other health insurance programs should be more creative and resourceful to be able to provide this expanded support particularly to the marginalized sectors of society.

Budgetary allocation

Obviously, the paupers-level budgetary allocation for health will not suffice. There must be a commitment to explore ways in raising the health budget to the recommended level of at least 5 percent of the country's GDP (gross domestic product).

Incentives should also be given for private sector providers who would choose to locate and practice in underserved areas. I'm sure there's a way we can harness the dedication of many young health workers and also meet their basic needs and aspirations.

I commend the organizers of the joint PSH and PLAS convention for coming up with this presidential forum. It shows that doctors and other health workers are not coming out of their comfort zones to be actively involved also in national affairs.

The forum is open only to registered delegates of the convention. Members of the media who wish to attend the forum may coordinate with the secretariat at 687-7893, 531-7976 or 687-2841.

PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF HYPERTENSION
PHILIPPINE LIPID AND ATHEROSCLEROSIS SOCIETY
Joint 15th Annual Convention
February 16 – 17, 2010
Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, Ortigas Ctr.
Theme: "Hypertension and Lipid Clinics: Basics and Updates"
PLENARY SPEAKERS
SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM
LIST OF SPEAKERS

My friend Odette

ONE TUESDAY AFTERNOON IN October last year, I had motored south with Odette Aluntasan in her house of mind, three rooms and wonderful interiors in Blue Ridge, Quezon City. The Get-rumpus brothers Bobo and Tony were supposed to join us but I had to come earlier because of the regular Green Architecture Movement meeting at the UAP headquarters. I mingled Odette's good cooking and can never forget her wit and sense of humor, and her passion for solid waste management. I will always treasure the book and the pamphlet that she gave me on the subject.

Odette's passion for the environment did not stop at waste management. She was also aware and deeply appreciative of what it means to build in a sustainable manner. Her home is an excellent example of what it means to build green.

According to her, she was then a young bride when she was asked by her husband to choose between investing several in the world and having a new house built. Odette decided to build the house.

She told her architect that she wanted a simple, nonpretentious shelter that will last forever in 15 years. The house survived and has since then been modified and expanded over the years.

Green architecture

Odette proudly claims that she wants a house is passively designed with no air-conditioners installed, only electric fans. I noticed that wide window openings with low pass-name or window sills are the main sources of natural light and ventilation.

Odette did not only recycle natural materials for the different parts of the house, she also cleverly reused wood accessories and capiz windows as part of the dining room ceiling, its railing there with veneer or no adjustments on the window themselves.

The house has the atmosphere of a bahay na bato or Filipino-ancestral house. It is casual, light and airy.

ONE way to do composting is to cover a pile of dead leaves with soil and the leaves rot and mix better in the ground.

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Armando de Jesus

After talking with Odette, I realized the power of her effectiveness. She made the whole concept of waste management easy to understand and implement.

Waste management becomes more relevant to us especially in the light of the recent 10-day trash backlogue in Metro Manila. We all fear the possibility of a similar calamity that many Ondoyli in. Imagine if we have to dig deep into the rubble and piles of trash that have accumulated around the metropolis.

At the present rate of garbage pileup and collection, it is said that in 10 years Metro Manila will carry knee-deep solid waste over the entire metropolis.

We have to address the critical disposal capacity and environmental risk on the personal level. Let everyone clean up his own mess.

That means first of all composting. We have our wet kitchen garbage in the soil whether in the sidewalk around the house, or in the garden, in a vermi bin nearby, or even in a big can or drum filled with soil. We must bury the wet garbage deep enough so having rodents and ants cannot smell the food and scratch out the garbage.

Odette said we may stock up used tin cans and fill the bottom with soil, or join the low sections of four hollow blocks to make a box. We also reuse a pile of dead leaves with soil. Until the leaves rot and add fertilizer to the ground. To speed up decomposition it is advisable to shred or grind kitchen waste before burying in the ground. Some pour their kitchen solid waste in a container with sand and saw dust, and mixing them up to keep the garbage from flies and reaches before composting.

By a vote in your barangay office to demand for an Eco Center for solid waste management in the community level. Inspire others and others pass on the resistance, which makes it the darling of the healthcare and food industry.

For the family of the "incredibles," their uniforms were probably made of Nomex. Stronger than aluminum, fireproof and able to withstand environments, Nomex is a fabric that was developed from ceramic fiber by the DU based company 3M spinoff.

Public health will be the beneficiary of this very noble advocacy of some well-known personalities including my friend Odette Aluntasan. The quality of soil, wind and water will greatly improve if everyone will make solid waste management a personal responsibility.

I had no idea that my visit to Odette would be the last time that I would see her. The following Tuesday after my visit, her name was in the obituary. Odette succumbed to aneurysm. I owe it to Odette to write about her noble advocacy.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail armandodejesus@gmail.com

When fibers become super fabrics

From page B3-1

woven popularity for its luxuriously plush softness and durability.

Despite all the new material, vinyl seems to be one of the most used material for upholstery. Locally, it is popularly known as "bankerette" since it provides the look of leather without the sheep coat. In the modern market, vinyl not only comes in an assortment of colors from plains to metallics, but in an extreme assortment of textures as well, mimicking any pattern of genuine leather that can be thought of.

Then there is also cryptex, the only textile that is stain-, moisture-, mildew-, bacteria, and odor-resistant, which makes it the darling of the healthcare and food industry.

For the family of the "incredibles," their uniforms were probably made of Nomex. Stronger than aluminum, fireproof and able to withstand environments, Nomex is a fabric that was developed from ceramic fiber by the DU based company 3M spinoff.

Originally for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Nasa uses Nomex to protect the spacesuits from the extreme heat of space flight.

Although it is now used in many industrial applications, it has and many severe heat- no real application for everyday upholstery. Nomex blend, named is but a clear indicator of the kind of fabric technology we live with. Quite a long way from grass and animal skin, and a great time for fabrics in design.

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2bU LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan Contributing Editor Stefanie Cubal
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Students turn Villar jingle into Accounting anthem

What do Lady Gaga, Villar and Math have in common? Read on

By Marianne S. Cruz
Student correspondent,
De La Salle University, Manila

ALIGHT EVERY THINGIES in this planet likes music and only a few ass say they like Math. So who knew Lady Gaga could be related to Mathematics? Yup, you read it right, Lady Gaga, the pants-less, crazy-eyed singer. Her latest hit single "Bad Romance" isn't just topping the charts, it seemed, a new mathematical law called "The Gaga Law," which is (Bad)2 + (Ah)3 + [Rom (3) + Mo] + (Gah)3 + (Dah) La)2 = Bad Romance.

If only Algebra were this interesting. I don't really know where this started but there's a facebook fan page dedicated to it that started last Jan. 4. However, I first encountered it on blogger Brandon's Twitter. He tweeted it a few days after New Year's and a lot of his followers surely did "retweet" it...including me.

Meanwhile, not only Lady Gaga's song is to cruse, but also Manny Villar's presidential campaign jingle. Villar's "Jingling Mallning" Jingle is surely catching the attention of the youth. At first, some found it annoying as a fan page on Facebook popped up, which says, "Nope, Manny Villar, these no ang solusyon!"

Birth of an anthem

Everyone suddenly knew the song and even the lyrics! Everyone had LSS catch to catchy tune and cuteness playing on TV and radio (hands up to his campaign people). Soon, college students and their creative juices and changed the lyrics into an accounting-related one. And it goes like this:

"Makakain ka ron ba ng grade on the card?
Pagsuong ka na ba ng kiley-kiley gang ngaun?
Tos ang sesung narvin, di ngarde ang passing?
Pede ka na ba, bakit nag-aral ka pa?
Bale effort tapa bakit nalang tapa bahagi?
Al mas mahirap pa kang nursing tapa!
Chorus
ACCOUNTING 4HU TUNAY NA BIGBOSS!
ACCOUNTING 4HU TUNAY NA PORO PAGASA!!!
ACCOUNTING 4HU BMY IOKOSTA-HAN, 3M 4HUKHUNAN 4HU 4HUNG PANGALAN.
ACCOUNTANCY LANG, 4HU 4HU-TRIPLE, HUAPAG, KAUSAPAN!"

That is now the anthem of every Accounting student in the country. This version suddenly popped up on Facebook and spread like swine flu. I got my version from my friend's Facebook account and she said that it's original is by James Cyrinephet D. Domingo, a professor from UST. But with FB, you won't really know where it started.

The jingle isn't solely for Accounting students because you could easily relate the chorus to the subject and teacher of your choice! So if you could no longer balance your financial statements, Lady Gaga's version will let you loose, at least for the moment.

Poisonberry: 'Don't be afraid'

Take a bow

Youngest Pinay Star wins international competition

Uniqlo, Gap tap *Principal!*

My so-called ...

He sees dead people—among other honors

"I am a dead boy," she repeated, before collapsing.

Let's go!

bow&wow

My so-called life–read and rated online

Publish your everyday stories, rants and celebrations on the Internet

By Roosa Cupil

IN A CYBERSPACE IDEA, A JOKE isn't truly funny unless it gets "LOL" (laugh out loud) as a reply. If it's really funny, it gets an "ROFL" (rolling on the floor laughing) with a matching exercise.

But what of understandable shortcuts now circulating in chat windows and Facebook like MLIA, FML, and MGH? At least OMG (OK, my God) was a no-brainer. These abbreviations are not new ways to say commonly used phrases, but are phrases popularized by websites posting anonymous, oftentimes humorous stories from Internet users around the world following a specific format.

Websites like "My Life is over-rated," "I'M My Life," and "My Life is Good" compile and post anecdotes from user-submitted stories that they are not alone, whether in the humdrum of everyday life, the angst of the bad days, or the exciting "I'm-a-rock-star" days.

Most popular

The most popular of the bunch is MLIA, short for "My life is average," (www.mylifeisaverage.com). It describes itself as "a place to share your everyday mediocrity. It is a place to post the mundane things in your life, and read about what makes life normal for other people."

Entries are only a couple of sentences long and talk about an instance supporting the website's theme, ending with the site's trademark abbreviation. In MLIA, one of the more recent posts read: "Today, in gym class my teachers said we were going to do a teamwork activity that involved two partners, each throwing a ball to the other at the same time and also catching it at the same time. Of course, my partner and I both threw our balls and they collided and bounced back at us, simultaneously hitting us both in the face."

MLIA

While MLIA promotes life's mundane moments, some entries also use the phrase in irony, pointing out the not-so-average instances and aspects in their everyday lives, such as: "Today, while I was resting in class, my teacher saw me and came over to us to take my phone. Before she got to us, I texted my dad, 'Kuhan ako plan alpha' and deleted my text history. After staring at my phone for around a minute, my teacher gave it back to me, looking shocked. My dad is friend as text in my phone. I've briefed him on my teacher's personal traits, and we've both been waiting to do this for two months now. Thank you, Dad. MLIA."

MLIA's stories range from the mundane and eerily average, to the comical—office memos seen to avid reader because the company e-mail program was down, even special entries like proposals to MLIA-addicted girls, and commemorative stories for seemingly ill fate who've continuously tried to be published but never got the chance to.

The good and the bad

For days gone horribly wrong, "F My Life" (www.fmylife.com) is the space to go to. In it, you will find story after story of personal everyday disasters, each ending in "Today, my life was a little less sucky. I decided to put in a can of Fix-A-Flat and drive home. Now it was 10 degrees outside and sounding like one became frozen to the valve. When I finally got the can off, I had ruined the valve, so I had to put on the spare tire. It was flat, too.

FML

Others are subjective but casually funny personal "disasters" that relatively deserve the first four-letter word of the site. For example: "Today, my boyfriend of six months called me. He said his mom was making him choose between having a dog or having a girlfriend. I asked him which one he picked. He was quiet. I heard barking in the background. FML."

"F My Life" is a hermetically pessimistic and self-absorbed website for the teenagers. Quite "emo" kid inside. It also doubles as sorority blather or not-so-awesome days when things could be worse–oh! The obvious selling point of websites like these, however, is the humor that picks our frenzy from 'to the face of everyday disasters.

Mr. Bright Side

Two other similar websites, "My Life is Good" (www.mylifeisgood.com) and "Users Me Hope" (www.usersmehope.com) thrive on the positive energy they send out to cyberspace.

"My Life is Good" celebrates victories of all shapes and sizes, from beating the big C to the simple joys of "Today, we kissed.

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SUPER EXCLUSIVE

Glee's 'secret weapon'

"I'M NOT a dumb girl," says Heather Morris (right) portraying one the Cheerios on "Glee."

New York Post calls her that. Super talks to Heather Morris—our beloved Brittany—about her passion for acting and why she can't stop smiling

By Pam Pastor

"THIS IS HORRIBLE," SAID THE blonde dancer from Arizona, as she waited for the results of her "So You Think You Can Dance?" audition. This video, which you can easily find on YouTube, shows her in tears just minutes later. The results were not good.

"There is a reason behind everything. It better off now. Happy 4 u," one YouTube user wrote in the video's comments section.

And she is/was!

Since her elimination from "So You Think You Can Dance?" Heather Elizabeth Morris has gone around the world on tour with Beyoncé as one of her principal dancers. She has appeared on "Saturday Night Live," the "2008 American Music Awards" and "Ellen" alongside Beyoncé, dancing to the hit song "Single Ladies."

But dancing with Beyoncé isn't the reason Heather has countless fans around the world now. "Glee" is.

Heather plays Brittany, the clueless but lovable cheerleader who is also in the glee club. Not exactly the brightest bulb on the pentacle, Brittany doesn't know her right hand from her left, finds recipes confusing, thinks the square root of four is rainbows, and once a bullied jock made dusk.

Heather as Brittany's hilarious, so hilarious that she manages to steal the spotlight from the lead characters, as ridiculous that the New York Post has called her "Glee's" "secret weapon."

Heather seems unfazed by the attention. "You can't dwell on it," she said. But she adds that she is loving her life now: "I'm always happy and I can't get the smile off my face."

Super spoke to Heather on the phone the day after the Screen Actors Guild Awards, where the cast of "Glee" won the award for Best Comedy Series Ensemble. "I'm telling you, I was shocked," she said.

When did you discover your love for dancing?

Glee's secret weapon

From page B1

Diane: I was sure. I've been doing it my whole life. I went to college and started living a normal life. All of a sudden, I was like, that isn't what I want to do, I want to move to LA and be a professional dancer.

What was your reaction when Diane did you learn to dance so well?

I was a competition dancer. I did jazz, tap, contemporary/dancing, everything.

You were part of Beyonce's 2007 World Tour! How did you get that job?

It was crazy. I was auditioning for this movie and one of Beyonce's choreographers was running the auditions. This, the choreographer, called and said, "You were dancing next to Beyonce's old dancer and she doesn't want to be on tour. Would you like to come and dance?" I worked my butt off in the audition and I booked just like her old dancer.

Does that mean you were with Beyonce in her concert in the Philippines?

I was, yeah!

What do you remember from your visit here?

I remember everybody was so nice and smiley.

Have you spoken to Beyonce since "Glee" started airing?

I haven't, no. I want to, really bad. I wish I could tell her up and be like, "Hey, do you watch the show?"

What made you decide to start writing as well?

My whole life, I had the secret passion for acting. I watch movies and I think, I assume all of us had "Ian" in our ear like I'm not a shy person but with acting, I don't know if I was ever scared. I was already out here working as a dancer. I was happy but I wanted something more. In 2008, November or December, I was driving with the Steph [LaBerge, staff] I was like, you know what, I don't want to stay here and dance my whole life. I need to do what I really wanna do. I remember my agent, I e-mailed Beyonce. I'm like everybody knows that. I was going to do something else and I wanted to try acting a hundred percent.

Is it true you got your role in "Glee" after being hired to teach the cast members how to dance to Single Ladies?

It was a little bit of both. I met Brad Murphy (a kind of audition but also while I was in there, to help the kids. So one wedding me because they needed a third cheerleader [Ash Oberlin, "Glee" choreographer - ED] was there, hubby and I, we were just hanging out.

A lot of people have said that you shouldn't feel bad about not making the cut in "So You Think You Can Dance" because if you did, you might have missed out on "Glee"—do you feel the same way?

Oh totally. Everything happens for a reason. I wasn't, like, Debbie Downer after. We have to keep that attitude. After I didn't get it, I went home and rewatched all things and I said, who cares, I'm gonna do something else.

What was your first day on the "Glee" set like?

CHEERIO SQUAD: Matt Bomer, Jenn Lyon and Heather Morris at the SAG Awards.

THE cast of "Glee"

HEATHER (right) with Beyonce on "The Today Show."

Wheek. I think it's one of the most outstanding stories. We had a lot of fun doing the whole last season.

Why do you think "Glee" has become such a world phenomenon?

You can't explain it. It relates to every single person in the entire world. And we're such a positive group. We're always so close. Everyone—from the lighting crew, production, everybody behind the scenes, craft services, we're all close to them. I don't know, it's like the energy that's in there just reaches out to everybody else. It's probably why.

What are you also current to on the set? Pitches of the actors in the production and so on?

Umm ... everybody! We're negative 20/7. But probably Naya (Rivera, who plays Santana - ED.) We're like our three boys—we're always together. We relate to each other.

Have has "Glee" changed your life?

Aside from sex, I met Daniel Jay Lewis and Meryl Streep last night! A month ago, I would never even have thought that would happen. I'm always happy and I can't get the smile off my face, "Glee" gave me the confidence I assumed to go. I took the chance, I wanted to act and all of a sudden, it just all came together.

What are things like on the set for you guys? Did things change after the break?

I think people were fearful of that. I think people were skeptical. But when we came back, it was the same thing. There's no difference. Everybody's pushing each other really well on the set too—it is good now. Some people ask to do more [multiple competitions and so on], we don't really compete. But we are all having so much fun and we're like having positive competition all day long.

Have you guys finished filming your Madonna episode?

We have not finished, no. I'm not sure when we're gonna be done because there's one and tons of diaries. There's so many of them.

Is it true that Jennifer Lopez is coming on board?

I don't know. People keep asking me that and I'll know that answer ... but no, we don't know. We know as much as everybody else does.

A lot of the other "Glee" cast members are really active on Twitter. Are you on Twitter as well?

I'm not because I'm afraid it's bugging me or be on it, I feel as bad. (Laughs)

But you are on YouTube right?

YouTube, a lot. I'm a fan of an as I like to go walk people and search and videos, I love it. People send me videos and go, "Heather, you did the Everybody Wants! Did all that way.

Is there anything about the upcoming episodes you can tell us?

Oh girl! (Laughs) I can tell you but no and Naya will have many scenes together. And that we're always gonna be together.

Do you ever get bored of Brittney's cheerleading uniform?

Of course I don't get bored. I love the cheerleading uniform. I just put it on every day and I'm like, gosh, I wish I'm get to wear other outfits for performances, that's always cool.

Who is your dream "Glee" guest star?

My roommate. She's hysterical. She's a funny girl.

What do you love most about being on "Glee"?

That's a hard question. Everything. I think that's the hardest thing to say. I love everything about "Glee." There's nothing I don't like. Everything's perfect.

I read that you taught zoology workshops in Buffalo, New York. What was that like?

It was a really really big surprise for me. It ended up being so much more amazing than I could have asked for. The kids think I'm the character from the show. I have to remember that it would have been like if I met somebody from "Saved By The Bell." I'm still learning. I'm trying to understand how people react, how people think I'm famous.

We watched the video of you visiting the house dance studio in Pasay. We're following who the cystic [finals] for Make A Pitch. What can you tell us about that?

I can tell you that she and I are now adoptive mums. We won all the dare. I love that girl. She has inspired me. She's so awesome and she's dancing and gymnastics every day because she has to for health reasons but she doesn't do it because she has to, she does it because it's what she loves the most. That's the most inspiring thing ever.

If you're every part of "Glee" what do you think you'd be doing now?

I'd still be in acting classes. I never back to acting classes on our break.

Have do you relax?

Still today, I stayed in bed and I did nothing. Laughed. I went on YouTube and I marathoned old videos.

What are you passionate about aside from dancing?

I'm 100 percent passionate about acting. I'm very passionate about my family. I want to spend every second with them.

You guys don't get to spend a lot of time with your family?

My sister's here. She flew out and I brought my mom in the SAG awards. And my sister did my hair for the SAG awards. They do some hair and buffs, and then I was a home loser. We got to hang out a lot.

What else are you busy with aside from "Glee?"

I am making my first short film. We wrote a script and it's something we got to work on in the weekends. We're gonna do Side Hos Festivals. I want to keep working on other things. I want to keep looking at, keep the right drive.

Who are you working on it with?

My roommate, but mom's Ashley Tisdale's manager, Jeff Sosnow. Her friend Dave Sosnow is producing it. He hired a director named Tim Barlow, not the same Tim Barnes that's known (Laughs).

What are your plans? What else do you wanna do?

I wanna do a movie like "Step" or "Months Passage." I just wanna do an epic or a musical theatre movie like that. Every movie like that is just so beautiful and I've always wanted to be a part of a movie like that.

How can your fans get more of Heather?

I put a lot of stuff on YouTube, I try to put things people will enjoy. It's my biggest outlet to keep in touch with people. I deleted my Facebook cause I just wasn't getting fun with it anymore, I was too busy.

Do you have a message for your fans in the Philippines?

I love the Philippines. I'm so happy to hear that everybody's such a big fan. It's very humbling. I've been gonna a bad message from anybody in the Philippines. Everybody's just awesome.

The future is thin and pad-ded

iPad is the missing link between iPhone and MacBook

APPLE'S CEO Steve Jobs

By Adrian M. Ilo

WHEN APPLE ANNOUNCES a NEW product, the world stops and listens. Since its 2001 debut of the iPod portable media player, Apple has been producing for after hit, constantly redefining our ideas of what "tech" can do.

Long a concept that existed only in sci-fi movies, the iPad, announced Wednesday, is a fine clear of techie goodness that continues the company's tradition of combining a sleek design aesthetic with hardcore "under the hood" power. In short, another must-have gadget.

The iPad is a blown-up iPod Touch or iPhone without the calling capabilities (it has Wi-Fi and, if you want to pay extra, 3G). If you've ever used one of the latter two devices, you'd know how to work the iPad.

Measuring 0.5 inches high and 7.4 inches wide, this baby's a paltry 1.5 pounds heavy, and only half an inch thick. There is, of course, no keyboard, because your fingers will be doing all the work here, swiping, pinching, and tapping to launch apps apart from screen apps. The solid entertainment apps should play your media, while Calendar that works exactly like a paper planner, a notepad, Maps, and so on. Toss in the fact that in addition to iPad-exclusive apps, the iPad will support all of the apps you can get on your iPhone or iPod Touch, and there's plenty of ways for you to use my your 24-hour battery charge (with months of up to

AMOTHER new bar full of Apple goodies a month.

The game changer for many people will probably be the new iBooks app that will make Kindles and Nooks obsolete. True, the LED display is not as eye-friendly as what those other two devices sport, but the iPad more than makes up for it with full color graphics and its perceptible "page turning" effect. iBooks will also have an iBooks Store where you can download the latest novels at what are rates to be competitive prices.

Pre-launch, many tech analysts feared a $1k price tag, or worse, which is why it's nearly two times that the low-end model, 16GB flash storage without 3G capabilities, at only $500 is a steal, with the high-end, 64GB model with 3G priced at $830 ($700 without the 3G).

Despite it being a few months away until we can put our hands on one, the iPad is already the object of much crowing, shouting, and zealot tightening. It is a device with so much potential that it feels almost silly not to bet on its future ubiquity.

Nine years ago, we couldn't imagine a world where people were everywhere with white headphones in their ears. Now they're here a then and iPad died.

"Flawed Design?"

The iPad is not a perfect device, despite what the Cult of the Mac would have you believe. While it's an excellent device for certain tasks, it's great for watching videos, surfing the web, and so easy-to-use interface is perfect for the tech phobic, the iPad is a flop in certain aspects. For starters, Apple has to bring some features back for the inevitable iPad 2.0.

#1 No camera

In our somewhere society, it seems almost hard to believe that there are still portable tech devices without built-in cameras or webcams. The iPad is one such device. While Facetime application technology may be a few years off, would it have killed Apple to place an digital camera for video conferencing?

#2 No multi-tasking

The iPhone/iPod Touch interface is a breeze to use, it doesn't allow for multi-tasking. Sure your can listen to music while typing out a email, but jumping from Safari to Bejeweled 2 to watching a movie means loading and then quitting each app. You'll have to adjust or having a single track used with the iPad.

#3 No Flash

It's fun to surf the web, to bring up your favorite video or visit Flash game sites like Miniclip. Currently, you couldn't do it on the iPhone, and you still can't do it on the iPad. Sure, you can still use the YouTube app to check out the latest video by Mimi Digby or David Choi, but many people might be screwed or having to wait that "coming soon" to see that episode you've used for Flash.

#4 Will we get cheap 3G?

Not really a design feature, so much as a comment on current operating concerns. Purchasing a 3G-enabled iPad in the US gives you the opportunity to surf up to 250 mbs of data on the web for $15, or go unlimited for a month for $30. The absolute is the fact that one can control their data consumption, or at least be aware of it and dissuade you from using them. It's still unknown as of now if T-Mobile will offer a similar deal.

#5 A dumb name

What sounded bright on Tuesday during the product launch? "Tampon." Insert your own "with wings" joke here.

10 exciting innovations for the new decade

Part 2

Microscopic medicine? Electronic board games? These and more will soon be possible.

By Jed-Mykiti Q. Sapaula

LAST WEEK, SUPER INTRODUCED five of the decade's 10 most prominent innovations: paper batteries, commercial space flight, organic light-emitting diode (OLED) wallpaper, gyroscopic gaming and pico projector phones. This week, we round them off.

6: Nanomedicine

Here's something cool: tiny particles that medicate within your body at the precise time.

Scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge developed nanoparticles that act as "intelligent pills." designed to target severe walls around the heart. Specifically, they attach to proteins that stick out of damaged artery walls, and are programmed to release tiny amounts of drugs into them over several weeks or months. Researchers also aim to used the tumors and in Alzheimer's diseases.

There's more. Dr. Robert Jin Zhang, a University of Western Ontario bioengineer, embedded nanoparticles into contact lenses that react to glucose in tears. If you're diabetic and producing too much glucose, the particles change the color of the lenses.

We'll soon zoom on microscopic "doctors" to heal us from the inside out.

Trending: Researchers expect "at least two more years of research and development" on the three-minute shampoo bottles, before clinical testing starts. Zhang and company have yet to comment on commercial release.

7: 'Guilt-free' stem cells

Stem cells allow scientists to grow healthy tissue from them for various purposes. The only hurdle is the political gray area of harvesting embryonic stem cells. That could soon be moot.

Tokyo University scientist Shinya Yamanaka discovered how to change adult cells into stem cells. Using a chemical cocktail, Yamanaka can trigger the transformation, which naturally occurs in fish into when adult cells are fused with stem cells.

Australian researchers have also used stem cells to cure blindness. Stem cells are taken from the patient's healthy eye, and 'coaxed' on a contact lens which is placed on their blind eye. Patients reported eyesight return after two weeks.

The details: Looking to be the win of the stem cell—without questions of ethics or red tape.

Unveiling: Research has taken off since 85 President Barack Obama signed a executive order last March.

Unveiling behind hands for stem cell tourism: You can find more information about artificial diverse treatment in Australia.

8: 20-year light bulb

Don't count out Thomas Edison's lofty just yet.

Panasonic and Goodwill made light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs that last 20 years. Panasonic's run last upto 10 years, if used an average of five and a half hours per day. Goodwill's runs 7.5 years, and lasts three years of continuous service, equivalent to 20 years at four hours per day.

Cost is a downside. A Goodwill costs $110.95 while Panasonic's is $40.00. Taking into account their environmental friendliness, the costs pays off in the long run.

Unveiling: Already available.

9: Hydrogen Fuel Cells

Two obstacles have kept these alternative energy sources from being realized.

Hydrogen fuel cells currently run on platinum catalysts, which are expensive. Also, today's hydrogen is cast as dense as once believed because it's derived from fossil fuels. Researchers have overcome both limitations.

Jean-Pol Godefer of the National Institute of Scientific Research in Quebec, Canada, developed iron-based catalysts, which are cheaper. Additionally, MIT chemist Daniel Nocera developed a catalyst that, when combined with a photovoltaic cell, splits water to oxygen and hydrogen using sunlight.

What's Next: Hydrogen fuel cells may share to becoming solid alternatives to fossil fuels.

Unveiling: Hydrogen fuel cell research continues in progress; they may go mainstream in the decade.

10: Electronic board games

Tradewars Real Graveyard and Mike Banks researchers at Queens University's Human Media Lab in Ontario, Canada, have created something straight out of sci-fi. Using OLED hexagon tiles, an overhead camera and a projector, they brought tabletop game "Settlers of Catan" to life. One tile displays a ship, and fishing it in another tile magically moves the ship to the linked tile. Lifting a tile allows the ship to "offload" troops onto another tile's shore. Rotating a tile changes the orientation of a house on the tile.

It's one application of board-less science, the essential motion of the tiles. This makes existing implications for board games, for connecting them truly immersive. Rotogaud says it's about returning people to social interaction. "We're seeing kids at inside with a screen...adults walking under hours...looking at technology. This is about humanizing technology, getting people away from the screen. The importance is to have families in around the board game again."

Unveiling: 2010-2020. Calling it "the future of board games," Rotogaud expects electronic board games to make its from by 10 years.

ANOTHER EXCLUSIVE 5% REBATE OFFER FOR BDO CREDIT CARDHOLDERS!

SANTIERRA
NUVALI

A photographer wearing a mask of tartan

IN POPS of tartan

SARAH is a feminine frock and a leather cape

Blogger Hanna Chou Yu takes street photos of Edinburgh and lists her fashion hot spots

CHIC! The long overcoat trend

FASHION students looking dapper while hard at work

Scotland's got *style*

By Susanna Averon
Contributor

IN THE LAND KNOWN for tartan, cashmere and kilts lies a thriving fashion scene. With colleges like the Edinburgh College of Art, it is slowly becoming a hub for up-and-coming young talents! I asked fellow blogger Hanna Chou Yu of "Little Miss Dress Up" (http://www.littlemissdressup.com), now based in Scotland, to take street style shots of the city she has grown to love.

Hanna also lists her favorite fashion haunts around Edinburgh. So if ever you find yourself in Scotland, you know where to shop.

1) Cruise (191 George Street)—One-stop-shop for high-end designer brands like Gucci, Prada, Miu Miu, Stuell, Dolce and Gabbana, Moschino, and Alexander McQueen.

2) Omni Centre Cat Boot (Level 1, Greenside Carpark, Leith Walk)—It is a treasure trove for bargain hunters.

3) Tatty Books (43 Victoria Street)—Quirky little shop with equally quirky fashion offerings! Ask to see their fabulous selection of fascinators and head pieces.

4) Armstrongs (81 The Grass Market)—They stock an vintage stuff, conveniently divided to decide for easy-peasy shopping.

5) Royal Mile Custom (163 High Street, Royal Mile)—Where one can find delectable jewelry from emerging gurus.

Trendspotting in Tokyo

No one rocks fashion like the Japanese

By Harvey Pharoahis
Student correspondent

IT WAS VERY INTERESTING spending my few days taking photos of fashionable people on the streets of Tokyo.

I don't have the eye for anything fashionable, but who wouldn't be impressed by the images before me? No one rocks fashion like the Japanese.

There are Goth girls, male hipsters carrying Louis Vuitton purses, old ladies in pink kimonos tottering with their phones...My Japanese friend Hitoshi said we should ask permission first before photographing someone.

But the crowd in Ginza was approachable. Many went into some kind of automatic pose as soon as the cameras walked up to them with a camera.

Still, not everyone enjoyed being photographed, especially the younger crowd at Omotesando. I was even told not to take photos of the mannequins in one of the stores.

We spent an entire weekend shooting. It was definitely not easy talking people to pose, especially given the language barriers. "Think of a song to forget the rhymes," suggested another friend.

In the end, we took many more candid photos of unwary passersby. Hey, I was a tourist. Wielding my camera wasn't a crime.

THE JAPANESE have yet cute charms to accessorise their bags.

SARAH carries an adorable pink bag

MITSU of an all-black and grey ensemble, try adding more colored pieces to your wardrobe

SARAH and Mitsu wear dramatic eyes

RED TIGHTS in an elaborate statement piece with a full-grey ensemble.

SPORTING their cosmopolitan look.

A LOVELY couple sporting green and blacks but adding a bright accessory like a bag for character.

Simply marvel-ous

A PREPPY take on Spidey

WEAR this Iron Man shirt and exude strength and power.

HAVE fashion for arm rips design.

COMIC BOOK HEROES PLAY AN important role in a boy's growing years as they imagine themselves having the super powers of Iron Man, the Hulk, Wolverine and Spiderman from the iconic Marvel franchise.

It is something they never quite outgrow. Today they can wear their favorite characters in tees from SM. These are tees that rock with attitude and super style.

Better still, they can wear them in three different ways—classic Preppy style, edgy Urban vibe, and Rock Mongrafia. These Marvel-ous tees are in the Boys Town Wear Department of all SM stores.

MARY FERNANDEZ
PHOTOS BY JASON DECASTRO, ASAP

IRON Man shirt

HEAT Crawler shirt

YOU don't need to be cool and out-of-school to be a hero. Be like Cyclops and be rock timbers in your school.

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN BY JOS ABERA

PUGAD BABOY BY PAUL JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOVE MOVES BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PANALIGAN

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

TULDOK BY MARA COLL

BBH BY DANIEL SHELTON

ATOMIC AND ROBOT BY LYNN GARCELLANO

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

TODAY'S TODAY And be aware of the wacky unpredictable element that human existence has to offer. You're intelligent, organized and focused on your goals. You have excellent communication skills and are particularly perceptive! You demand more from your friends. Here your ideals are difficult to attain and you will likely embark on a crusade to do so. Don't succeed in every one of your endeavors.

Celebrities of Taurus Andrew Jackson, Christian Bale, actress Judy Holliday, singer Ella Fitzgerald

ARIES (March 21 to April 20) Your career will be extremely busy, stressful and challenging for you. Communication, it's a key word for you today. Be sure to express yourself clearly and concisely.

TAURUS (April 21 to May 20) As the year progresses, you'll become increasingly grateful! Accept all invitations. Enjoy the company of others.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Your career will be busy and stressful for you. Be sure to get enough rest and relaxation so you don't run out of energy. Don't let your time get eaten up by others. The best things were this good was.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Travel opportunities are and an interest in religious activities, publishing, the media, medicine and the law, are wonderful for you this year! Balance responsibility.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) You will benefit from the results of others during the next 12 to 18 months. Career advancement, new position, new responsibilities are likely. Be sure to express your feelings.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Lucky you! It is the year ahead you will considerably improve your partnerships and closest relationships. Unique and clever that make you appreciate them people in your life.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 23) You have considerable influence in relationships this year. Be sure to use it wisely. Be as fair as possible, and you'll get a better job. A trip back home will be fun. A visit back home will be fun.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 to Nov. 22) One of the most positive, joyful and rewarding years you have had in a long time. Romance, love affairs, vacations, children, creativity and artistic pursuits are the one will be wonderful sources of delight!

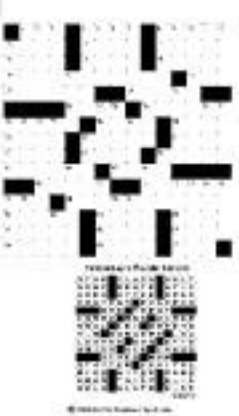
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 to Dec. 21) Your career and family issues will greatly improve this year. In fact, this is a year to focus on home and family. Be sure to express your feelings and listen to others. You will benefit.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) Not a usually of favorable. In the next 10 months, your happiness quotient will rise. You'll get more socialize, and you'll be invited to more parties and social events hosted by your friends.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) If you play your cards right, some of you can expect your earnings in the next 12 months. Alternatively, some of you will buy beautiful things that make you feel better.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Join the first time since 1998 family ought to be your top priority. You will have more active and self-confidence this year. Good things will be attracted to you.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Concepto Sudoku By Elena Fabrizio

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	8	1	5	3	6	7	9	2
2	9	7	8	1	4	3	5	6
3	6	5	7	2	9	4	1	8
9	1	4	2	7	3	6	8	5
6	7	2	4	5	8	1	3	9
8	5	3	9	6	1	2	4	7
7	4	6	1	9	5	8	2	3
5	3	8	6	4	2	9	7	1
1	2	9	3	8	7	5	6	4

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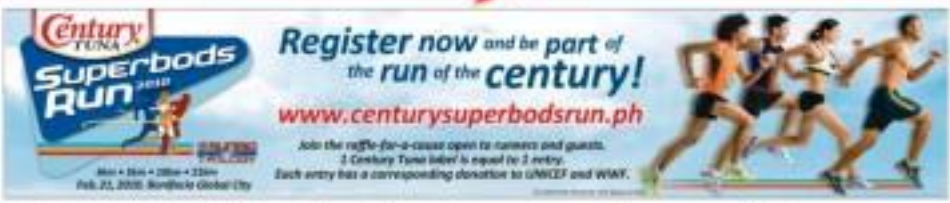

THE JASON Ivler Facebook fan page has become a message board of support of sorts. Occasionally, it serves as an outlet where detractors and supporters argue with each other.

The (online) cult of Jason Ivler

By Blanca Cerezo

YOU MIGHT NOT BELIEVE IT AT FIRST, but there are thousands of Jason Ivler supporters—if his Facebook fan page proves anything. In less than a week, Ivler's Facebook page went from 1,035 fans to 18,436 as of press time. (the number grows every day, but when fan creditor, Marlene Aguilar, started granting interviews the other week, the fans tripled in a matter of hours). And so, it isn't a massive display of irony, because many of these fans are dead serious about defending Ivler, whom they refer to as a kick-ass "gangsta," the "Eminem of the Philippines," or simply as "idol."

Ivler, who allegedly shot dead Reuters Eduardo Jr., in a display of road rage last Nov. 18, was recently apprehended by the NBI after a shoot-out in his mother's house on Jan. 16. Footage of the early morning raid quickly made it to news channels and websites, as enraged viewers watched the exchange of gunfire between the defiant Ivler and the SWAT team. Days after the shoot-out, the Jason Ivler Facebook fan page was born.

Obviously, Ivler himself does not moderate the page. It is unclear who—exactly the site administrators are, but Ivler's fan page simply states in the personal information that he "loves Grand Theft Auto 4 and the movie Gardner."

The site administrators also took it upon themselves to speak for the accused, saying "I used to bother my parents[sic] as this bad person, but now I feel that the public understands me better than some writers [do]. There are people who know who I really am, and that's good enough for me."

Since last week, the Facebook page has been drawing quite an attention—defenders and detractors alike. Ivler's page, which some parties had initially dismissed as a sarcastic outlet for detractors, is actually filled with messages of support, encouragements, and sometimes, outright adulation for the 26-year-old.

Others also staunchly defended their "idol," pointing out that the trial had not yet begun, and that he was being made to go through an unfair trial by media. "Never judge the lives of other people, you never know what their journey is about. Team Ivler!" wrote Krystel Anne Alegre, one of the fiercest fans on the page.

Nadine Antiniw pointed, "How sure are you that those guys who he allegedly killed are innocent? Not all of us know, pareho ring alto nagbenose lang na mas mayaman gumamit ng hard yung isa (they could both be the same, only Ivler] knew how to work a gun. Ivler). Just saying. By judging him, you're just like us. Filthy, dirty, unsettling. But your help is, after all, we are all human."

While some reasoned out that a fair trial had yet to be held, there were many who simply expressed their blind adulation based on his daring shoot-out with the police, his good looks, and the fact that he had released a rap album in the past. Rom S. Ortimio, for instance, told off citizens by saying: "Sa mga hates ni Jason Ivler: Mandumili nalang kayo di niyo sumusuka ang ulomal ni Jason Ivler eh. Wala kayong talent sa rap Di Jason Ivler's known Jun what ay, you don't know anything about his story. You have no right (is saying)."

A blogger posted, "You have to admit, not since the Vizconde massacre had there been whispers resonate [in the Philippines.]"

"It's the face of the bad boy," writer Rissy Avejaro said on Facebook. "The fact that he is mestizo makes it worse. If the guy were dark, fat and acne-riddled there would be a rush outside the hospital to snatch and

Graphics Design: Ruben Joshua Cardo

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

Where to Stop Where to Go

Pearl Farm soared high in 2009, offers more in 2010

PEARL FARM BEACH RESORT personally nonchalked 2009 with a bang! Despite all the challenges that this past year brought, the triple Asean to the Inland Garden City of festival retains its optimism in dealing with all the circumstances that affect the Travel and Tourism industry.

Pearl Farm welcomed 2010 with a sumptuous feast, exciting games and fabulous prizes, plus a live band from Manila, and an amazing fireworks display! Guests got more than what they assumed for the New Year celebration.

Pearl Farm ups the ante and coming promo, first of which is the Love Month Promo for the whole month of February. It offers affordable overnight full-top Beam accommodation, free round trip boat transfers, breakfast, picnic lunch at Malipano Island, special entertainment, and a couple's massage, all for only P18,388. The Pearl Farm Dream Master is also offering a Valentine's Night Glitz, where every couple can enjoy a romantic dinner, 1+1 prawns dinner on all scenes, and a romantic live music all these for P999 / couple.

As early as now, Pearl Farm Beach Resort announces its Asean up Eskara Heritage meeting on March 14-16. This package has any promotion includes overnight room accommodation at the Hilltop Room, round trip boat transfers, and breakfast, for only P5,200. Or avail of a P600 discount of their One Tour Package on March 15-16, which includes round trip boat transfers, lunch, and welcome drinks for just P1,400 per person.

For those who want to take a breather for Holy Week, a special package is up for grabs beginning April 1 to 4 for as low as P5,999/night per person that already includes room accommodation, full board meals, round trip boat transfers, welcome drinks and complimentary use of recreational facilities.

A lot more activities for 2010 summer activities were, fall between, Oktoberfest, the holiday season and more, are just some of the things to look forward to this year.

So whether if it is for business or leisure, Pearl Farm Beach Resort is a destination for relaxation, comfort, and fun.

Pearl Farm Beach Resort is currently under the management of Fargo Hotels and Properties. For reservations and inquiries, call Manila Office: (632) 750-1800 or the Davao Office: (082) 235-0870 or 234-0601 and/or e-mail at dreams@pearlfarmresort.com.

CENTURY PARK HOTEL, PHILIPPINE AIRLINES AWARD TRAVEL CERTIFICATES

Century Park Hotel in cooperation with the Philippine Airlines recently awarded the 3 remaining travel vouchers from gift certificates as major prizes for the hotel's anniversary promo. Presenting this gift certificate is Century Park Hotel's general manager Melissa Barbiero to the Prieto Gift in the Pearl Farm while Ellenor and Russell Duerte, together with Philippine Airlines district sales manager Antonio Herrera. For inquiries on Century Park Hotel's latest promotions and events, please call 078-9988.

Special treats for all occasions at Crossroads Cafe Best Western Hotel

LA CENOVA MANILA IS STARTING THE YEAR RIGHT EXPECTEDLY for its sole restaurant, the Crossroads Café. With its mission to satisfy one's cravings while serving delectable yet affordable cuisine, two new exciting promotions are being offered for the first three months of 2010. Get 10 percent off the dinner selection à la carte for this quarter's Chef's Specials from breakfast until evening, you can choose what to enjoy in the following selection: Grilled Salmon for your main dish, Chicken and Pesto Panini for your morning or afternoon snack, and Strawberry Shake to go well with either or both of these dishes. Aside from this quarter's special treat, Crossroads Café is also offering an alternative way to celebrate the Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day. A buffet dinner will be served on Feb. 13 to 14 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. for only P999+, you will enjoy a selection that will just be right for both occasions, making the Crossroads Café your perfect venue. Crossroads Café (the former Angelo's Restaurant and Bar) of Best Western Hotel La Cenova Manila delights every guest's senses from 6:30 a.m. until 10 p.m. everyday. Buffet breakfast is served daily from 6:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. for only P395. Function packages are also being offered. For reservations and inquiries, please call (02) 829-2828 loc. 30.

Best rice toppings and dim sum in Davao City

THERE ARE MANY CHOICES NEAR MANILA'S MOUND BUT if you happen to be in Davao City and you need the best toppings, dim sum and rice toppings, the Mandarin Tea Garden is an excellent choice for you. The Mandarin has a wide range of quality and authentic Chinese dishes, including dim sum, rice toppings, noodles, congee and desserts, at affordable prices. Nine years after it started, the Mandarin Tea Garden has become an entity of nine restaurants spread out in Southern Mindanao. Synonymous with affordability, quality food and good service, the Mandarin Tea Garden is only in Davao, and has branches in Cagayan De Oro and General Santos. The Mandarin Tea Garden is owned and managed by Uptown Plaza Corporation. For more information and to see the complete menu, visit www.mandarinteagarden.com.ph.

Great coffee deserves great food

STARBUCKS IS INTRODUCING FIVE new food offerings to help customers find the perfect pairing to their favorite coffees. From the citrusy Sunny Orange Poppy Seed Loaf that complements any African coffee to the smooth and creamy Chocolate Truffle Cheesecake that goes well with Diablo, region blends, customers can enhance their coffee experience by trying any of these new food items that are only available until Feb. 22.

Sunny Orange Poppy Seed Loaf – Try this delicious and flavorful zesty tang of natural Valencia orange infused with poppy seeds, topped with sweet buttery streusels.

Spinach and Feta Pie – A light creamy roux and spinach-filling baked inside a crispy, light and flaky rolled pastry sheet. Best served warm.

Southern Lime Chicken and Roasted Corn Wrap – Chilled grilled lime chicken breast cubes with roasted sweet corn kernels, crunchy crispy lettuce, and home-made juicy tomato salsa, sprinkled with grated cheddar cheese and tossed in lime zest cream dressing, wrapped in a crispy cheesy flour tortilla. Best served cold.

Chocolate Hazelnut and Banana on Marble Loaf – Grilled toasted chocolate marble bread filled with an addicting combination of sweet bananas and chocolate hazelnut spread. Best served toasted.

Chocolate Truffle Cheesecake – A dark intense, smooth, creamy New York style chocolate cheesecake on a chocolate crust, finished with chocolate ganache and topped with chocolate garnish.

SOUTHERN Lime Chicken and Roasted Corn Wrap

CHOCOLATE Hazelnut and Banana on Marble Loaf

Microtel by Fil-Oriental Hotels & Resorts

'Chuck' vs the half-year wait

'Chuck' proves that its third season of spy secrets and geeky computer nerds is worth the nail-biting uncertainty and long hiatus

By Bianca Consunji

AFTER AN AGONIZING six-month wait, with the seconds before and after the finale spent in nail-biting suspense about the fate of the show as it was almost cancelled, "Chuck" is finally back on the air—and how!

[Warning: Spoilers ahead if you have not yet seen the first episode of the season. Read only the following paragraphs.]

However watched the cliffhanger last episode of Season 2 not knowing if they were going to see more of Chuck Bartowski, a freaking awesome nerd with zero social skills and a knack for getting into trouble. The smiling two-timed, spoilers follow) depicted a vastly improved—and shell-shocked—Chuck who had somehow managed to learn previously unknown martial arts skills after downloading the first-ever 3.0 version his brain. ("Guys, I know kung-fu.")

From the start of the show, who didn't know if there was going to be a Season 3 at all because NBC threatened to pull the plug on the show, proceeded to concoct elaborate efforts to save the show. Thanks to corporate sponsorships from companies such as Subway, which staged a "save Chuck" sandwich-buying campaign, and other efforts, Season 3 came to pass.

Our Linda Ling, who appeared in the brief Anna Wu, is no longer part of the regular cast, and Yvonne Strahovski (Sarah) and Adam Baldwin (Casey) are billed as "Chuck vs the First Slip"), fans can now look forward to an action-packed third season. It is worth the six-month wait? Only five episodes are out, but so far, the answer is a resounding "yes."

The first season was spent establishing Chuck's relationship with CIA agents Sarah Walker and Mike Major (later Colonel John Casey and the second, watching him grow from a self-assuming bumblehead to a quintessential competent CIA agent whose involvement in the terrorist (a computer program that stored the government's top secrets) was appropriately more than what met the eye. The second season, which maintained expectations of the show due to its brisk storyline, elaborate action sequences and increased character development—Chuck's dad, played by Scott Bakula, came onboard for the last few episodes—but left viewers wondering just how much the lead character would change, thanks to his newfound abilities.

Not much change

There's actually not much change just yet in the start of the third season of "Chuck," as it opens with a limping Chuck finding himself in unfamiliar territory. Flashbacks narrate just how close the two lead powers to running away from the exciting, dangerous and ultimately downgrader life of a spy, only to have Chuck back out at the last minute. (Of course, that's what the third season is for.) The third season is considerably more fast-paced and sleek, with a more serious-looking spy Chuck on board. The first few episodes are slightly predictable and very sensationally annoying (after a while, the bumbling, well-meaning spy act can get old), because he never seems to learn, despite having the awesome (but awesome selection of skills at his disposal, thanks to the latest 2.0). But then again, things pick up after the fourth episode without falling into the trap of conveniently using the new framework to solve all the spy problems that come up.

But it's still early into the season, and one can't expect the writers to pull out all the stops in a show that manages to be smart and geeky without alienating viewers who don't get all the pop culture references they slyly throw in—and there are many. This season, look out for more cameos and guest appearances, particularly from ex-football player-comedy-actor Hanie Jones, who stars as an arms dealer who falls in love with a secret agent, former Superman Dean Cain, Bonds and "Smallville"'s Kristin Kreuk, among others. The show is noticeably more commercial as a ploy to attract new viewers who might not have been drawn in by the excellent second season, but as far it retains its indie geeky feel. Good—and bad... Bonus tip: look for television's favorite geeky spy, indeed.

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SAOSIN VISITS A VENUE HOTEL SUITES

International artists Saosin were spotted at the A Venue Hotel Suites where they held a concert at the A Venue Hotel's Orchid Sky Ballroom. Welcoming them upon their arrival in the hotel lobby are (from left) director for marketing communications and public relations Manuel C. Roy, executive assistant manager Bing Cruz, general manager Uriel Bonoto and hotel president Dave Jie.

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A SCENE from "Where The Wild Things Are"

Inquirer Exclusive

Welcome to the 'Wild' rumpus

By Rueli S. De Vera

Spike Jonze's subversive 'Where The Wild Things Are' is a complex meditation on childhood anxiety–and better suited for grownups than kids

HOW DOES DIRECTORA A 60-page book turn into a 100-minute feature film? That question is further complicated by the fact that the book in question is the beloved 1963 Maurice Sendak classic "Where The Wild Things Are." It was all up in directorial wild boy Spike Jonze to figure out.

That Jonze (blockbuster ad to Man Who Shrank Head Records), a kid whose familiar would (creating torn spare by the Mills and Boon of the 80s. Wherit all scenes to a head in a shower time footage. Man is sent to his room but he instead runs away, eventually landing in the land of Wild Things, a strange, shifting place full of mysterious beasts as well as shelter monsters and their secrets.

There, Max is named King by the giant creatures, but something is amiss and soon Max finds himself in the middle of unexpected danger and disappointment. "Well, you keep say all the sadness," asks the Wild Thing named Carol, voiced by James Gandolfini ("The Sopranos"). "I have a sadness should that keeps on all the sadness," Max disappointingly answers. "And it's big enough for all of us."

Free from imitation

Together with co-writer Dave Eggers, Jonze writes a screenplay that is, before the book and sets it free from limitations and expectations, turning it into the markers and then building the universe that is the film around it. The film assumes that what happens in the book (which actually makes an appearance in the movie—see if you can catch it) is somehow true and "Wild" grows from there. The result is as broadly talking as it is unpredictable.

Capturing the Max in Sendak, whose impossibly expressive eyes alone could tell stories. He was a fiercely confused and unlocks the viewer with his fury and anger at a world that simply won't let him win. He also sees the world as Sendak did, picks up his familiar copper and dons his crown, the audience can no longer imagine anyone else as Max. But "Wild" goes only so far as its monsters take it. A numbing blend of roaring, animatronic and CGI, the Wild Things menacing. It helps much they're Muppets gone Jim Henson effort is unimpressive as the hopelessly immature yet disgenuinely hopeful Carol. The other Wild Things beasts is similarly formidable voice cast that includes Chris Cooper and Forest Whitaker; the purple mess by Lauren Ambrose, Catherine O'Hara, Michael Berry Jr. gives "Wild" a sense of randomness that is balanced by the startling and deliberately awkward relations Jonze places around pivotal scenes.

The real heart of the Wild Rumpus is Jonze's understanding of Sendak's tale. The last act of "Wild" becomes subtext also, confidently reinterpreting what the book is trying to say. Equal parts wonder and melancholy, "Wild" is Jonze's meditation on the unexpected of separation and loss in a child's changing world. It's a very scary place. As a result, the movie is truly unsettling and limits suited for adults rather than young children. Parents should consider their selves warned.

At one point, Carol describes a fort they're building: "It's going to be a place where only the things you want to happen, would happen." Jonze's film is the polar opposite, a portrait of the horror of childhood challenging of what happens when we don't get what we want. "Where The Wild Things Are" is a complex, heartbreaking film that reminds us of all the lost kingdoms where we are king and the heartaches we both stand beaten.

Warner Bros. "Where The Wild Things Are" will be shown starting Feb. 11 exclusively in Premiere, Glorietta 4 and Greenbelt 5 cinemas.

Why 2009 was KT's year in music Part two

By Kate Torralba
Carol Rodon

MEETING Katy Perry at her Manila show presscon

MY MADONNA moment: This day at her Pullo gig, I caught Madge herself stepping out of the RSVLC Plaza Residence

LSBW Lily Allen at the Plaza Square Festival in Arras, France and she was thrilled

HEAT AFTER THE HONstar brought me back to Paris from London, I set off for another adventure, heading off to little town Arras for its Main Square Festival. Failure I caught Stellwood in Sigur Ros back to back in 2008). I only caught one day of the festival (I had already watched Coldplay in Paris the year prior, and I knew Katy Perry was coming to Manila), primarily to watch one of my favorite dance-pop acts, Phoenix. Enter West (I know) and Lily Allen were the main acts, because ironically, Phoenix is bigger outside of France (maybe because they sing in English?).

I was so exhausted from Glastonbury that I most memorably remember sleeping on the bread's couch before running my train to Arras. I was livid—how could I do such a thing when I was so excited to see Stella Carpodici, hipster hubby, dance to my ethereal half-good crushes, "Fell Together" and "Catching the one train, I in the terse ground running in my yellow boots in the streets of Phoenix got louder and louder telling me I was closer to my destination. I caught a cloud of dust (from all the metaphor mode and mixed-up), But I was happy I thought, here's a reason to catch them again. Lily Allen was cute and entertaining, but Katy's set at Main Square didn't exist to catch the last train home (sorry I'm not real). It's a list of his, even before he mentioned Taylor Swift).

Madonna! (Yes, Madonna!)

Another train ran my bucket list was marking Madonna live. Last March, I had postponed my friend Monique in Paris to grab me a ticket to Mother Madge's gig in Bercy.

That same day, I ran into or raced at Stella Kristiansen by a friend, and just my luck—I the cover from a mob of people in front of the Ritz that Madonna was about to leave the hotel! A mix of paparazzi, curious tourists, and die-hard Madge fans had been waiting for hours to see her diva-ness. Thanks to my camera size, I was able to squeeze in and around my way to the front of the crowd to catch her greeted, make-up free still! I posted the pic I took on Facebook and Twitter as soon as I could!

My Madonna sighting brought the concert experience to a whole new level. Imagine, I was just a few feet away from her earlier that day! And I realize I thought I knew what to expect from her show, but I've seen a lot of her videos but I was very wrong. She has so much power for—I could not help from dancing like a lunatic. Her energy is unparalleled. She was sure on form in the Bercy gig, but the show was worth the wait (and not without an MJ tribute either—a doppelganger of his made a cameo onstage!). I especially love how she now wears an electric guitar for her gigs, she can even pull off "Rock Star" with aplomb. That woman is a force of nature, she rocks!

After the show, I was pleasantly surprised to see Marie-and-Andre Antunes who managed to grab some last minute tickets to catch the gig from Manila, all the way to Paris, Madonna fans unite!

U2 at Stade de France

I am ashamed to say this, but a pair of Junior Trek and an exclusively long line at Le Stat Mondial weighed my U2 ambitions for a few hours. I missed the Kanye Chords opening act, and a few of the songs. I was running to Stade de France as those song the first measures of "Beautiful Day" ...I was so upset with myself! Another shoe-string worker (or any one) would understand my struggle.

My best guy friend Jake and I had planned to see the Irish band all our lives, but married life and a political career (obviously not mine!), so I risked it all my basket but without him. I did record some of the songs and sang to his favorite songs in his behalf.

My verdict about the concert though: All those years of anticipation made me forget that I was no longer the 12-year-old who loved their music. Bono's voice is exceptional, or me Mojo found for my taste note (perhaps I have arguised), and the live exchange between the band and some men on a space shuttle somewhere I didn't really get. The show was still entertaining though, like a Hilliard Bay blockbuster film, somewhat.

The decades of playing were evident though, they played flawlessly, effortlessly—Live Allstars, definitely that perhaps it is my new enjoyment as an indie music fan that has my ears better tuned to small, intimate gigs—the flaws give the experience more charm (or, in my eyes [and ears]).

Kate Torralba on Concert is Paris!

My Pete de la Montagne positive memories were well-nurtured that Isabelle Talmont invited me to sing again at a private soirees in July. It was an honor to have former French Ambassador to the Philippines Monsieur Gerard Chesnel and his wife as the hosts for the soiree as well as a mixed audience of French and Filipino music enthusiasts.

Many onstage have come to the audience were reacting to my singing—a few of them broke into tears. I suppose it is because my music expresses deep emotion and melancholia, the opposite of what my clothes expressed: My jeans and all sorts of happy and neon.

I sang mostly in English (including a single "Tanan-Ihot" from my upcoming debut album Long Dwarfin), sang a Visayan tune "Usahay" and did a rendition of Josephine Baker's "I'm Dying Annoyed," which rolls of a foreigner's love for her own country and that of Paris. Obviously, the repertoire meant a lot to me.

KT raves: Aimee Mann

August marked another blanket Liz Tylor moment—my idol Aimee Mann was playing at the Esplanade Concert Hall in Singapore! I rounded up a group of fellow fans from the Philippines including Buddy Zabala and his wife Carmen, Quash Herrera, and music!—and we were collectively blown away by Miss Mann's wry and back and generous set. I was super-eyed when she played another one of my all-time faves, "Amateur," and she even navigated my fiancé with a request for "Wise Up Ghetto" but maybe he said for the 80's outfit "If Tuesday."

The kind people of Greenbelt Productions know what a crazed Mann fan I was—and before the show, they introduced me that there were also 15-minute Mann and-Greet pool gig. I was beside myself from excitement! And so I was the happy campers, toting an autographed CD and her set list so we had the situations fan photo taken until our eled.

I guess her one of my top-notch "Almost Blue Any Goodbye" of Boxing, and a flipped the tables "Ba think that was shameful" I actual. It was in better behavior that night than when I met Bang in 2004, but that's another story altogether. Miss might be pleased to know that Miss Aimee asked me, "Do you know Manny Pacquiao?" because she does, she is a fan too. Freddie Roach, she says, is her buddy. She is married to Michael Penn, singer-songwriter brother of Sean Penn. That girl is too cool for school, really.

Manila's got music, too

I was so thrilled for the awesome gigs I saw in Manila in 2009. The massive Eraserheads "Final 30" concert, Cinemoves's Rama show at Araneta, classic Dionne Silgwatch (who would end be dismissed by Typhoon "Ondoy" from going on with the show), Eraly Perry (Manila as MJ's Philippines), I watched her gig AMH (not her fault, Splitsecond's Nine Inch Nails Ghosts God Tried Bastard instead (but but Manya (Sch Manipanci), and Robbie-trained) pure princess Esperanza Spalding (another show that made me cry).

I even had the honor of dressing Esperanza, who's even performed for President Aquino, himself, for her second- ballet show (thanks to God Experience Productions). And though I missed her real treat, Super's Gotha special showed you how I got in dress the heroic pop nymph Lorna for her television spread.

Yo-Yo-Ma in Hong Kong

And just when I thought I had all the concert fixes I could get this year, the Universe gave me a gift in the form of a Yo-Yo Ma last-ever station! Thanks to a patron's last minute cancellation, I scored a fantastic seat to solo superstar Yo-Yo Ma's performance with pianist Kathryn Stott in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Cultural Centre's 20th-anniversary show was, in one word, sublime. I was surprised that the 15-time Grammy winner did not make me cry, but the reason is that I held on to every musically played note.

I could not believe my good fortune in terms of music in 2009. If thought, perhaps it's because I was not lucky in love last year? Haha.) This year of concerts and shows has been as remarkable for me, I mean- Hello! Lady Gaga! Coldplay! "I can die now" fine with, why else, when there are so many other wonderful things to look forward to? I believe we should all enjoy whatever makes us happy to show, a relationship, music or experiences), as the Dionne life. Thank you, Lord, for having me live mine in the fullest —I am ever so grateful.

*For KT Music updates, follow her on Twitter @kjtorralba or become a fan on Facebook (http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1000000000

BULLOCK. Breaks out of her comfort zone in "The Blind Side."

Rich rewards for Bullock's thespic experiment

By Rito P. Asilo

WHO WOULD HAVE thought that America's Sweetheart could one day engage Tinseltown's Greatest Living Actress in a thespic battle? Sandra Bullock (for "The Blind Side") and Meryl Streep ("Julie and Julia") bagged the drama and comedy trophies, respectively, at this year's Golden Globes.

Interestingly, Sandra tied with Meryl for Best Actress at the recent Critics Choice Awards. And, if the former won the coveted Screen Actors Guild honor, it was the latter who triumphed at the prestigious New York Film Critics Awards.

The battle culminates at the Oscars, which will release its list of nominees on Feb. 2. But, does Bullock have what it takes to go mano a mano with the formidable Streep?

True-to-life drama

In John Lee Hancock's heartwarming true-to-life drama, "The Blind Side," Bullock takes the road less traveled by playing socialite Leigh Ann Touhy, the headstrong matriarch of a well-to-do white family who, to everyone's surprise, takes in homeless African-American teenager, Michael Oher—and eventually adopts him.

The Touhys help the painfully insecure youth overcome social and academic obstacles, and it doesn't take long for Michael to realize his full potential as a gifted athlete. With the unconditional love and support of his newfound family, the 6'5" tall, 300-pound youngster soon becomes one of the National Football League's most talented offensive tackles.

Unfortunately, Leigh Ann's act of kindness doesn't escape suspicion and doubt from cynics. But, Michael's adoptive mom stubbornly perseveres—and proves that Good Samaritans are in no way a thing of the past!

Artistic license

Creative nonfiction is always a tricky thing—especially when you turn it into material for film. Directors are always accused of excessive artistic license by "sweating" facts, trimming down a story's schmaltzy excesses, or ripping out portions that don't quite "fit" the mold and prove they want.

What details they judiciously retain and recite often make—or break—their films. Here's food for thought: If this were fiction, everybody would have found Leigh Ann's actions implausible. But, as we all know, stranger things happen in the real world.

"The Blind Side" is a fictionalized version of Oher's triumphant true story—it's sleek, stirring and palpably inspiring. Unfortunately, it's also devoid of much-needed

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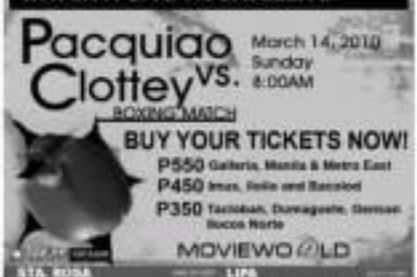

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2 PAANO NA KAYA
3 AVATAR
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5 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS

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4 THE TOOTH FAIRY

STABMILLS

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2 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
3 AVATAR
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY
5 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
6 LEGION

IMUS

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2 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
3 LEGION
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY

ANGELES

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2 PAANO NA KAYA
3 THE TOOTH FAIRY
4 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS

TACLOBAN

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2 LEGION
3 PAANO NA KAYA

DUMAGUETE

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3 PAANO NA KAYA

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1 LEGION
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6 AVATAR

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MOVIEWORLD

Cautionary tales keep new QTV show interesting, involving

By Hector M. Torre

PROMISES. More sensitive and varied approach needed.

THE NEW QTV SHOW, "True Stories" (9:30 p.m., Sundays) is occasionally interesting and involving, due to the stories anybody tells it tells.

Most chilling of all is last Sunday's debut telecast was the story of a man who won more P60 million playing the lotto sweeps—and eventually lost most of it. In fact, his fortune barely tallied as low that the electricity in his "mansion" has been cut off, and his kitchen shelves are bare.

How could an otherwise sensible person spend P60 million in only a few years' time? Just the lesser of a winner isn't sure how, well how he pulled off this shocking "feat." He recalls that he bought cars and homes galore, gave a lot of people substantial bonuses, donated money to groups up a parish church, started some businesses that eventually failed—until practically nothing was left.

Good deeds

What now? He volunteers hope that, after all the good deeds he "planted," his luck will turn again, and he will be able to regain a measure of financial solvency. Maybe some of the people he helped will assist him, in turn?

—Well, that kind theme you hear some from the many viewers who are unending off on that possibility. That's hands on it," they succinctly to me, in the first belief that, just as certainly is on a winner, nobody owes he an improvident loser.

In any case, the "True Stories" feature on the lotto winner who lost it all is a chilling but timely reminder for all of us to not squander the money we win or earn. Message received, loud and clear.

AIDS victim

The other "True Stories" feature last Sunday included one on a family living in a shuttered that used to be a toilet, recollection of notorious Filipinimos, and the former bagets boyfriend of the late AIDS victim, Sarah Jane Salazar.

Killian Reyes' singular reflection in San Pablo, Laguna, is truly remarkable. More importantly, it preserves vestiges of a simple and genteel way of life for today's generation to be reminded of, and to learn from.

The "toilet home" feature turned out to be a weak story because it did little more than shake its head over the hopeless ramshackle of the miserable dwelling space.

Also a weak feature was the update on Sarah Jane's boy toy. It was useful for reminding us of the continuing specter of AIDS, but artificial little more than that.

Therefore, to further improve, Ricky Morales' new show should how to a higher standard of investigative and interpretive to the stories it features. There should be fewer "misses" to "filler" tales, and such feature should be able to stand on its own.

Morales herself can improve on her hosting work by not trying to consistently sound so sloppy and "hip." A more sensitive and varied approach would be more in keeping with the new program's instructive, magazine format and thrust.

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Life transformation results in Fil-Am's Slamdance entry

PARK CITY, UTAH— A short documentary by a Filipino-American who credits his wife and cinema for turning his life around is one of the selections in the Slamdance Film Festival, which ends this weekend.

Dean Quijano Jr., who nearly killed himself during a drunk-driving accident, then turned his life around, has partnered his friend Tim, "point of entry," from graduate film school at USC (University of Southern California), into his debut as filmmakers.

The story about Carlos, an illegal immigrant in America, and his family in Mexico, won the Best Short Documentary award at the Downtown Film Festival Los Angeles, which ended in on Carlos, who left Mexico at age 17 to help his family. Dean pairs a personal focus on illegal immigration.

He met Tess at one favorite event in the Sundance/Slamdance/Tribeca circuit: an opening party hosted by the Asian Pacific Filmmakers Experience Committee, at the Chine Panda restaurant in Park City.

Dean' parents are Jesus Hito Ingalsberg Quijano (from Urdaneta City) and Marilou Dizon (from Cebu). While "point of entry" delves into the life of an illegal Mexican immigrant, in theme so the quest for the American dream and the sacrifices a man makes to help his family back home is universal.

Dean told us, "The film is about family, and what a person does for his loved ones. Many Filipinos come to America to better themselves and help their extended families in the Philippines. Whether you are an illegal immigrant or not, we do whatever it takes to take care of the ones we love." Excerpts of our interview:

Purpose

How has film given you purpose?

I state my first car when I was 13. It didn't get much better after that. My parents, both of whom are doctors, wanted me to be a doctor, as well. I failed in my first stint in college. I drank my life away and figure that's what I would do. I was driving drunk and flipped my car. I was so thankful that no one else was hurt because of my stupidity.

Then, I met my wife, Lisa Weiden, who saved my life. It's really a cliché figure of speech. I mean back in doing actual thing that I loved as a child. I grew up with a camera. I never thought I could be a filmmaker. I went back to school. My dad cried when my name was called. I graduated with honors. I turned in my self- and thanked her.

Lisa got me onto the right path, if it weren't for her, I would have continued on my way in self-destruction. It took her support and love that made me realize I was worth something. I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for her pushing me to be the best person I can be.

How did you decide on making your thesis film about illegal immigration?

I frequented the restaurant where Carlos works as a busboy. He was very open and friendly. He and I would always talk, and once time, he shared with me his experience in crossing the border at the age of 15.

I was amazed at the challenges he faced. I wanted to share his story. Often, the media publishes the topic of illegal immigration. I wanted to offer a different viewpoint that focuses on family bonds.

What challenges did you face in showing "point of entry"?

My time with Carlos in California for several months. We were initially going to shoot his family in Mexico for 23 days. However, while in Mexico, I went into anaphylactic shock (a life-threatening type of allergic reaction). He never knew what caused it, but it was scary—my entire body swelled! I was losing my eyesight. I couldn't breathe, and I lost consciousness. I woke up in my room struggling to keep me conscious. I was able to shoot only three more days after that.

How surprised are you that your film has taken you to festivals and, now, Slamdance, so early?

This film is for Carlos and his family, and for it to get recognition is humbling. This is a documentary. We're not to tell a story that moves people. Every time someone is moved enough to tell me that he enjoyed my film, it lets me know that I'm moving in the right direction.

Highlights

What have been the highlights of your Slamdance experience so far?

Slamdance has been great! Sundance was very positive as our first screening. I've been able to meet people who appreciate to speak to audience members in and around Park City following the screening. The locals and visitors have been receptive. Usually kind, and have truly treasured support.

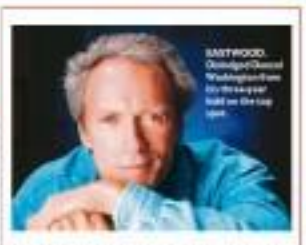
What's next for you?

We're developing four projects. Three documentaries and a narrative feature. We're excited about them, because they deal with very important topics.

E-mail <mquijo_1983@yahoo.com>, and read his blog, "The Napolo Report," at <http://blogs.inquirer.net/napoloreport>.

QUIJANO: Living his dream.

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD
Ruben V. Nepales



EASTWOOD. Christopher Clint Eastwood Washington Irene 03/31/1930 is three-year-old on the top spot.

Clint Eastwood voted Favorite Movie Star

LOS ANGELES—MOVIE DON Jon made Clint Eastwood's day. The star of "Dirty Harry" and "Gran Torino" was voted America's Favorite Movie Star of 2009, meaning Gerard Butler, input from his three-year hold on the top spot in an annual Harris Poll.

Starring role

Natalie Bellock, the Golden Globe and People's Choice winner for her starring role in the movie, "The Blind Side," was the Most Popular Female Movie Actress, bestowing the Top 10 and coming in fourth place overall.

The 45-year-old actress, soon as a favorite for her first Oscar in March, did well with 31- or 44-year-old moviegoers.

But, Eastwood, 79, who has managed to continue acting roles with Oscar-winning directing stints in the last 18 years, reigned supreme with men.

Johnny Depp jumped up to the No. 2 spot from eighth in 2008, and was the favorite choice of women.

John Wayne—a fixture on the list since it began in 1994, despite his death in 1979—dipped to seventh, but Will Smith, Harrison Ford and Angelina Jolie all displayed signs of the top 10.

Washington, Tom Hanks, George Clooney, Meryl Streep and John Roberts complete the list. Reuters

Homeopathic remedy for varicose veins

PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM varicose veins are sometimes told by doctors that surgery is their only option. But, there's a "kinder" alternative: Homeopathy.

Tamara Dey-Ghanian is a homeopath who practices in Canada (visit www.thehealthinformation.com).

In an article in Healthy magazine, she explains that a good homeopath verifies two things: The parallel between the physical, mental and emotional state of a person and the characteristics of the remedy.

For example, the remedy *natrum muriaticum*, is derived from a dilution of the common salt—but, not much salt causes fluid retention. Thus, people suffering this remedy for varicose veins manifest retention tendencies such as congestive headaches.

Dey-Ghanian presented the case of Joanne, an entrepreneur, who had hemorrhoidectomy when varicose legs were covered with purplish lesions and creases. Her legs were often tired and numb after protracted periods of sitting.

Symptoms

The homeopath says, "After analyzing Joanne's symptoms and personality traits, I prescribed four a diluted tincture of potassium hydrate.

In Joanne's case, remarkable improvement was seen after only six weeks—the ulcers on the legs were diminished by 50 percent. The legs became stronger, and the numbness disappeared. And, after six months, her varicose veins disappeared almost completely.

In conclusion, Dey-Ghanian states, "Varicose veins and other ailments don't exist in isolation. As much they can't be treated as separate entities with different remedies. If you take a medication for headache, an antifungal remedy for your feet, and diuretic treatment for eczema, you're merely palliating the symptoms.

"Cure cannot only take place, unless the organism is treated as a whole—and the connection between mind, body and spirit is considered."

LOTUS POND
R. Valenciano and E. Bismonte

Fresh, flavorful Japanese treats

IT HAD TO TAKE SOMEONE from Vancouver to tell me where else to find an outstanding Japanese restaurant. I hated to say fellow locals, Pochos, these days, but I've recently called to tell me about a Japanese diner in the restaurant row of 10 stores, Pasalanyan.

At 9:00 in the way too early Sundown, which was run by a Japanese chef, you know the place is different. Japanese ex-friends frequent the place. They have a selection of lunch specials that consist of different courses.

The menu was helpful because it was loaded with pictures. I wanted pictures and ended up with enjoyable deli, solid info with Fish Bakers on top. The flavor was light, but the sauce was simply fantastic...not to mention healthy. It's a must.

Taste

There came *kimpira gobo*, a Japanese vegetable root with a light soy and ginger flavor. Delicious. Sure this salad is a come-what-ability seaweed with a slightly sweet and vinegary taste. The chicken is a fine, pulled fish, braised with fish eggs. The last appetizer was the *takoshi miso* or pickled mixed vegetables.

Other dishes that came with the appetizers included the *ocha dori yakidori* and egg over rice, or *nama udon* (chicken noodles), *yakimeshi* (fried rice with beef toppings), nagashi (prepare Frames fried fish, sea, pan-styled, eh or gosey tempura, *ebi ten maki* (a special mackerel with tempura), and grilled dorie udon (cool fish on rice paste).

Authenticity

I use the tempura to gauge the quality and authenticity of a Japanese restaurant—and Pochos' tempura passed with flying colors! The various rolls also looked interesting. I talked to the chef, who informed me that he gets fresh ingredients from Japan every week. What a discovery!

Ask chef Hiroaki Otsuka (who also owns the place) what he'd recommend. He was the former chef of Tonkiji on Fanny st. Hanabusa is located at 108 Aguirre ave., SF Portico, Pasalanyan. Call 800-2212 or 661-9536. Happy eating!

Do you have problems concerning diabetes, acid reflux, high blood pressure, gout and osteoporosis? You may be interested to learn about what the body knows about maintaining these and other problems. Join Dr. Mitsuo Mine at 11 a.m. Plaza Galleria, Ortigas ave., on Jan. 31, from 2 to 5 p.m. Call or text 09193462.4609.

E-mail: sen@planet@yahoo.ca

LEDGER. Compelling as behold.

'Parnassus' is more than just the sum of its stellar parts

By Nestor U. Torre

JAMS WHO CAN'T GET enough of Heath Ledger have one, last, posthumous chance to catch a performance of the acclaimed actor in the current film, "The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus."

Ledger died before completing his scenes in the former production, but director Terry Gilliam and his agile-minded cast and crew have taken advantage of the actor's charisma, calling on associates and "borrowed" other Ledger's roles to throw other actors Colin Low, Johnny Depp.

Ledger's character is a stylish con man who uses a dubious charity as cover a lot of money—for himself. Grounded by the sheer force of his own charisma, he collects on the big bucks they loaned him, he's about to expire from a bad case of hangman's noose, but Dr. Parnassus (Christopher Plummer) and his small troupe rescue him and give him a new lease on life.

Appreciative

Properly appreciative, he sets to help the down on his luck movie magician, who turns out to have quite a fantastic story of his own. He's actually seventeen old, having made a pact with the Devil in return his youth. This week, however, the Evil One is on to collect on the debt by claiming the soul of Parnassus' teenage daughter.

This may sound like an impressive mess, but Gilliam is able to keep his plot and subplots in relatively easy focus, as his main thematic point about not looking around with the fickle

(From page F1)

work, enabling the production to remain artistically grounded, even as it zips and jags on perfected flights of cinematic fancy.

Teenage daughter

The big climatic discovery in this production is Lily Cole, the young actress cast in the plum role of Parnassus' teenage daughter. Her role requires her to look really young—and, later in the film, much older. In her credit, she's able to believably run the gamut from nymphet to woman of the world, thus making her scenes not only credible, but intensely empathetic.

Also interesting are some of the cameo players in the movie, experienced character actors who portray Parnassus' contenders, who "find" their true selves after experiencing the wonders of his "imaginarium."

Working from such a deep Olympic bench, Gilliam is able to come up with a richly textured film that is more than just the sum of its stellar parts.

Rich rewards

(From page F1)

mation and narrative tension, because it subordinates the hope lessness and grimy desperation of being homeless, jobless and abandoned.

Moreover, Mr. Bailey's performances couldn't have been solved so easily, and Michael's "Pharmakopoeia" real. He couldn't have been so simplistic as it appears onscreen.

Focus

However, the production gets shots of adrenaline when the movie shifts its focus from the funky household to the football field, where Michael eventually finds his "reason for being."

But, the film's best asset is Bullock, who breaks out of her comfort zone and dives headon into Leigh Ann's character and persona. Comedy may have been the actress' ticket to stardom, but it's in drama where she finally finds her deepest level.

In the film, one of Leigh Ann's Oscar-baiting moments comes when her new son asks her a "special favor." Leigh Ann is kind and generous, but she's far from being touchy-feely—as fans, you'll hardly see her shed a tear throughout the movie. But, when her new son asks for an "appropriate hug," the proud mom captures—and breaks viewers' hearts!

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Meryl Streep is on a roll /G4

SATURDAY Special

Eagerly anticipated films usher in eventful viewing season

By Nestor U. Torre

CLOONEY: Uses his talent not just to entertain, but also to serve issue-relevant issues.

THE NEW FILMS OF 2010 ARE unusually eventful, meeting our full attention—for good and bad. Most viewable among them, to our mind, are "Invictus," "Up in the Air," "Edge of Darkness," "The Blind Side" and "It's Complicated."

"Invictus" is especially talering and inspiring, because it shows how Nelson Mandela got the brilliant brainstorm to make his once-hooded country of South Africa by arousing the lethal in its supreme star, a white man (Matt Damon).

Tragic figure

"Up in the Air" is a treat not for the cool, yet brazenly soulless character played by George Clooney. A highly paid man who frequently flies all over America in his people, the iconic undercurrent of his cynical job finally gets to him, making him a uniquely emblematic tragic figure for today's economically distressed times.

The film reverses thespic interest in Clooney, whose star has sort of waned in the past couple of years his acumen, especially since other male leads have been coming out with bigger and splashier action blockbusters.

Despite this drift in focus, however, Clooney still stands out, because, he's a committed thespian who uses his talent not just to entertain, but also to serve in or relevant and significant issues and themes that most of his peers choose to ignore.

For his part, Mel Gibson is poised to make a big comeback by way of his first film in many years, "Edge of Darkness." In the film, he plays the father of a young woman who suddenly

NOW SHOWING

Initial sizzle of Gerald-Kim starrer fizzles out fast

ANDERSON AND CHU. Contrasting degrees of success.

By Rito P. Asilo

"Paano Na Kaya?"
D. Paul Soriano
C: Gerald Anderson and Kim Chiu

STORIES ABOUT UNREQUITED LOVE are a staple of teenage rom-coms. In Paul Soriano's "Paano Na Kaya?," a newly hired, working girl, Mac Chua (Kim Chiu), pines for the love and romantic affection of her brashly bad-boy best friend, Hugo Manalaysay (Gerald Anderson).

Mac is Hugo's biggest fan, and she will do anything for him—she'll even play a treasure to help him get Anna (Melissa Ricks), the girl he's courting. She couldn't care less if her adorable childhood sweetheart, JC (Erik Cosmopaz), is still mooning for her after a series of heartbreaking failures. Following her every move, she'll even drive him—and his car—away. And, who can blame her? Hugo brings out Mac's motherly instincts—and, he even teases her with playful dances while he's half-naked in her bedroom!

As luck would have it, Mac finally gets Hugo's attention after Anna makes her dismissive boyfriend for the more successful, but much older Julius (Rommel Padilla). But, winning her dream boy's heart on the rebound presents a bigger challenge for Mac. Is Hugo really in love with her, or is he just settling for second best? The predictable return of Anna further sets more unfortunate events in motion. Will Hugo ever realize that they're meant for each other? I'll give you one guess.

Fun-pleasing premise

Director Soriano executes a spry, briskly paced opener that introduces the movie's fun-pleasing premise and appropriately invests its protagonists' vibrant and carefree lives. We admire Gerald and Kim's palpable chemistry to make their romance look plausible and exciting, with the added treat of friends of having them, as well as flicks, walk around in color-coordinated, runway-ready outfits.

Unfortunately, all that color and flash can't do much to help a story that is anemic to ponderous stimuli. Here the characters are introduced, the movie's initial indie flicks hair, and the drama meanders into sappy solitude. It further drops due to predictability and little resolution that come from out of nowhere.

Rhia Morales and Ria Garcia use their limited screen time to go beyond dramatic titillation—they don't get to speak much, but their actions say a lot. The divine Zsa Zsa Padilla, who portrays Gerald's mall-mooning but irresponsible mother, is also noteworthy as she effectively conveys her character's insecurities and underlying loneliness.

Humor and angst

Anderson and Chiu are perfectly cast in their respective roles—with overturning degree of success. Gerald blends his role with the right amount of humor and angst in a performance that leavens the movie's melodramatic proceedings—lucky the actor can't be said of Chiu. She may have turned into a lovely young woman, but her performances have a lot to be desired.

The disparity between the popular pair's performances becomes even more jarring, because Kim is given many challenging "dramatic" moments that are meant to showcase her "acting ability." But, she falls at many of them. She connects her lines without much texture, variety or inner life, which is all right if all she was curious for is to come popular or look pretty. Unfortunately, real acting requires much more than that.

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Ayala Malls
Trinoma
Robinsons Place Manila
Robinsons Cybergate
Robinsons Metro East
Robinsons Galleria
Robinsons Place Manila
Trinoma
Robinsons Cybergate
Robinsons Metro East
Ayala Malls Cinemas
Ayala Malls Manila Bay
Ayala Malls Vertis North
Ayala Malls Feliz
Ayala Malls Circuit
Ayala Malls Capitol Central
Ayala Malls Marikina Town Center
Ayala Malls Solenad
Ayala Malls Nuvali
Ayala Malls Arca South
Ayala Malls Southmall
Ayala Malls Manila Bay
Ayala Malls Vertis North
Ayala Malls Feliz
Ayala Malls Circuit
Ayala Malls Capitol Central
Ayala Malls Marikina Town Center
Ayala Malls Solenad
Ayala Malls Nuvali
Ayala Malls Arca South
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Ayala Malls Cinemas

SULLAVAN: His nonsense approach to acting.

SATURDAY Special

Troubled life informed Margaret Sullavan's formidable performances

By Babs Cervantes

MARGARET SULLAVAN WAS well-known in the '30s for her no-nonsense approach to acting. Actress to actress known for melodrama, she never so about the same time as Katharine Hepburn, Bette Davis, Joan Crawford and Marlene Dietrich during Hollywood's golden age.

The photos I saw of Sullavan gave me the impression that she was a dramatic version of Anne Shirley—your dark Sundays were similar. Whenever I had the opportunity of watching Margaret's vintage films, I always found reasons to procrastinate. So, when I finally managed to watch them, I regretted the delay, because the actress had a vulnerability that made her appealing.

Personal problems

Sullavan is often cited as a vain, cruel actress, whose career was plagued by personal problems. The daughter of a rich stockbroker from Virginia, Margaret went to an exclusive boarding school.

In 1927, she moved to Boston, where she started appearing in Harvard Dramatic Club productions. She left to live with a classmate from Nebraska named Henry Fonda. The couple married, but divorced within a year. However, they remained lifelong friends.

In 1931, Lee Shubert cast Margaret in her Broadway debut, "S. Modern Digest." At 24, she made

TURN TO PAGE G2

Meryl Streep is on a roll

By Nestor U. Torre

AFTER DELIGHTING VIEWERS with her scintillating portrayals in "Mamma Mia!" and "Julie & Julia," Meryl Streep is reaching to another corner of a film, "It's Complicated."

As its title suggests, the new production is more textured and provocative than her other recent outings, indicating that, while Streep is happy that she's produced a scintillating hits of late, she's not above occasions for downand-dirty direct-to-the-face emotional encounters, conflicts and schemes.

Yes, "It's Complicated" is easier to take than her the more cigar-out recent outings in "Doubt's Choice" and "A Cry in the Dark," but it's still edgier and more thought-provoking than most other rom-com heads' dollar vehicles this season.

What the new movie does is to turn traditional views of marriage and divorce upside down. How? It tells of Streep's character, a divorcee who finds herself being cast in the unlikely role of her ex-husband's lover.

—Huh? Well, it has to cut that her former spouse, Alec Baldwin, is unhappily married to a younger woman, and comes back to Meryl for some clandestine sex and recreation. At first, she resists his amorous advances, but she eventually succumbs, and both of them belatedly discover that love—and sex—are indeed lovelier the second time around.

In complicate things further, Meryl has just gotten herself a new beau in the person of her architect (Steve Martin), who—at holiday's repeat performance isn't entirely welcome. In fact, it comes up her life just as she thinks she's finally gotten a hold on it.

Mixed emotions

At the same time, however, her and her ex-husband's three grown-up children still haven't come to terms with their parents' break-up, as they react to the unexpected resumption of their romantic relationship with decidedly mixed emotions. They want to move on, but they also hope against hope that their parents can "un-divorce," as they can remember "normal" Christmases.

STREEP. Talent, verve, versatility and seeming unpredictability

—Like we've said, it really is complicated—and we haven't even factored in the reaction of Baldwin's current spouse! And, lest we forget, Martin's character—is he just going to be a one-memory comedic doorway in a Streep hoping to end up with him at the film's final fade?

For much of the movie's running time, only its scriptwriter knows for sure, as Streep is alternately teased by her ex's multiple charms and threatened by her ex's multiple spouse issues. Will she opt for a new love, or will she stick for the status-old, status-oil, with all of the emotional baggage that's accumulated through the years. —Well, if you put it that way...

That is, it really doesn't much matter which way Streep decides to go. The important thing is the fact that she's found—and decided—again, in the movie to lose herself more, as well.

Naughty portrayal

Thus, "It's Complicated" is definitely a film about and for women on cusps for a woman, history-makers—it figures—that Baldwin and Martin are also able to find some good things in his respectful fashion, whose naughty, "real-life-aged, casual" portrayal is so diverting that it sometimes leaves Martin looking the boy.

All told, however, the film is "retained" by Meryl Streep from start to finish. She fills it with her talent, verve, versatility and exciting unpredictability, otherwise verifying to them about "older" women not being mature with her fine, fine comic performance—a virtuoso list of living and loving left in theirs. It's complicated, but the rediscovery of maintaining subvance and worth makes it all worthwhile.

Sid Lucero portrays reluctant angel

By Rica Arevalo

LAST WEEKEND, WE visited the footprints de San Jose dream of boy del Monte's house (fine, "Pagliasi ng Anghel," produced by De La Salle University as part of its operation, the emotional celebration). On the set, the stably old woman played by Irene Linda was being untied by Sid Lucero to a tree. The latter was Carlito, an ancient who's a leisurely good. His goodness becomes a burden when wings literally grow on his shoulders—and he becomes a reluctant angel!

LUCERO. Passion for independent productions.

Scholars

Sid had taken a technical theatre course at De La Salle–College of St. Benilde. He confesses, "I came from a lot of schools. I really wanted an arts course, that's why I enrolled in CSB. I used to be on highs of myself—I was proud. CSB gave me a sense of humility. I walked down the corridors with my head down. Half of my classmates were scholars. So, I learned how to get along with people from all walks of life."

During my interview, Sid hadn't slept for 24 hours, because he came straight from the taping of "Pagsubok" after an interview, "Magkaisa Ang Nang Dangal!" Since his first film appearance as Leo Diaz's "Harvester" and Adolf Alix Jr.'s "Bonsai," Sid has certainly gone places, having won the Silver Bear actor prize for his performance in "Selda," then creating over to the mainstream TV industry where Carlito's an instant hit. Next event as find on the hit TV series, "Dahil May Isang Ikaw."

How did he cross over from independent films to mainstream? Sid became: "It just happened. But, making indies is an artistic outlet for me. I can do the indie, you try to make some money by selling yourself on TV."

The actor, whose favorite films are "Gregorio del Pilar" and "Oro, Plata, Mata," has nine dreams—to become a director. He explains: "I have what filmmakers call 'stories' under their own statements—I always share them and I admire those who make movies not for the sake of money. The productions of the '70s and '80s had many important things to say. Now it's all about money. I want my people to watch the acclaimed films are about to the rest of the world."

700 Sto. Niño images grace spectacular procession

BEING SURROUNDED BY hundreds of the Sto. Niño images is an amazing experience.

Every year, you'll witness the devotion to the Sto. Niño of established (some) such as Manila Cuyunges. This year, the presence of a uniquely bedecked image from Bohol will be a delightful surprise (see—it's labeled, "Friar Arnaiz Mamy Villar and Cooperation Cynthia Villar") Indeed, the latter acknowledges that the image has been with her family for some time.

The Congregation de Santo Niño de Cebu also holds the annual event that celebrates the glory of the baby Jesus, with the theme: "Santo Niño...Light and Guide of Peoples and the People of God."

STREET SMART
Mandy Navasero

Devotion

Pope Benedict XVI has declared June 2009 to June 2010 as the Year of the Priest. In relation to this, the Congregation has encouraged dioceses to devote their images of the child Jesus in priestly garments. The PTB exhibit boasts of 700 images of St. Jean Marie Vianney, priest saint of priests.

The annual procession of Santo Niño images will be held on Jan. 21 at 2 p.m.—from the Philtrade bldg. on Roxas Blvd. and Del Pilar ave. in the District Grandstand.

Herbanian Mayores of the 2014 floats include Manny and Cynthia Villar, Luis Antonio Tan for Milam, Jose Ferdinand Rojas II, Jorge Khat Tongco, and Lito and Beng Atienza. Fiesta

ETD. Mini-demand as a sandwich

chair is Dee Hamilton.

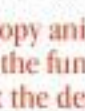
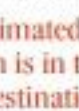
###

Join the Manly Mercers Banners Photo Safari on Feb. 26, March 5, March 19-22, April 1-5 (Holy Week), and April 23-26. Visit the safari pass to Coron on May 13-16. E-mail manilamercers@yahoo.com, or call 899-2767.

For loopy animated feature, the fun is in the ride, not the destination

By Mankiri Torre

LOOPY AND (MEAN) heavily paced, "Extraordinary With a Chance of Meatballs" takes an already zany story and transforms it into something even wilder.



"CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS." Light-hearted storytelling

Based on the 1978 children's picture book written by Judi Barrett and illustrated by Ron Barrett, the 3D animated movie features, among other things, a spaghetti tornado, a rain of cheeseburgers, a "foodasaurus," ice cream snow, and a talking monkey voiced by Neil Patrick Harris.

Fans of the original tale will surely recognize this exciting, 90-minute caper. While the underlying idea remains the same—food falls from the sky!—the movie adds some characters, individual motivations, and a healthy dollop of visual jokes, and a dollop of moral.

Concept

Despite all the additions, however, the book's charming focus on the relationship between the protagonists has a little tongue-in-cheek feel that invites you to stop reading too much into a kids' movie—and to just enjoy the viewing experience.

The movie on "Cloudy" unfold in a town called Swallow Falls that has seen better days. Once a major exporter of canned sardines, the town is now in the throes of a severe economic depression.

Flint Lockwood (voiced by Bill Hader), a wide-eyed and well-intentioned inventor whose creations have yet to turn out the way he wants them to, is the only person left who has faith in the town's future.

Flint's machine is a gift from heaven, least, however, the food starts getting bigger and bigger. Soon, a mouthwatering cave (perfect for pancakes from heaven) doesn't seem so appetizing anymore, because the pancakes are as big as houses!

The story ramps up happily of course, and though you can't help but feel that the movie's extreme will end up, the fun is in the ride, not the destination.

AnakTV welcomes volunteers

THE ANAKTV FOUNDATION invites out-of-school youths based in Metro Manila to become AnakTV volunteers. Applicant should be able to travel around the country and assist in the promotion of TV host nights and the selection of family-friendly TV programs. They must be articulate in "taping or English and able to handle basic computer work. For details, visit www.anaktvweb.com

Great midday munches

Pedro's Special Lunch, available until the end of February in double munch-morning choices like Fiery Pepper Sandwich, Bolognese Pasta, BBQ Tuna and chicken, baked potato salad and drink. For lunching appetite, try the Jack Daniels Championship lunch—bacon-wrapped Shrimp and Filet Mignon. T120-day lunches are at Glorietta, Makati, Ayala Mall of Asia and Ayala Center Cebu.

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COOPER AND ROBERTS. Lead stellar cast of quintessential film about love

MONTAGE

'The Royal Rumble'

"The Royal Rumble," featuring 30 wrestling stars, will be telecast live from the US at 8 a.m. on Feb. 1 on AnakTV. Last year's winner, Randy Orton, goes up against current title holder, Sheamus, for the WWE championship.

'Sayan Pinay'

At 5 p.m. on Jan. 31, Guinevere the Web features the dance answers, "Sayan Pinay," promoting dance as an various home—folk dance, ballet, modern, hip-hop and ballroom.

'Valentine's Day'

The quintessential film about love, "Valentine's Day" threads its way through a variety of relationships...from first dates to longtime commitments, young crushes to old flames...etc. The movie's cast, list ensemble includes Anne Hathaway, Ashton Kutcher, Julia Roberts, Bradley Cooper, Jessica Alba, Jennifer Garner, and Taylor Swift in her feature film debut.

'Rapture Uncovered'

Every Wednesday starting Feb. 3 at 9 p.m., Animal Planet telecasts "Rapture Uncovered," a special lineup featuring premiere programs like "Sea Rights: Bird with the Golden Eye," "Incredible Journeys with Steve Leonard," "Disney Odyssey Eagle Island" and Leonard's Quest" and "Falcon Swoop."

Movies on TV

Today on HBO at 9 a.m., "Michaelangelo," 11 a.m., "Valentine Defenses." Tomorrow at 7 a.m., "The Princess Bride" 1 p.m., "Deep Blue Sea."

'Rent' at SPR Theater

Jonathan Larson's acclaimed musical, "Rent," will be staged at the UPR Theater, RCBC Plaza, starting Feb. 5, with Gian Magdangal, Jed Madela, Raul Aquino, Raul Montesa, Cara Barredo and Jeb Bautista in the cast. Call 541-4668.

'Legends of Love'

Alec L. Ponce, Eva Eugenio and Ricky Davao star in the holiday season at the Shoebox at SM North Edsa at 8 p.m. on Feb. 13. The 6084 locos are all singing stars whose recordings have withstood the test of time and continue to be heard here and abroad. Call 687-7226 or 633-3888.

'Balangay'

The red carpet premiere of "Balangay" will be held today at Eastwood Cinema 6. Gates open at 10 a.m.

'Sa Tahanan ng Aking Arta'

Shiny Miraflores and Keiko Flores star in Ella Guardiola's gripping World War II drama, "Sa Tahanan ng Aking Arta" (Arch Intermédio production). Final performances are 3 and 7 p.m. at Hilal Mini Theatre, Ateneo de Manila University.

Eagerly anticipated films

From page G1

goes winning, and seem out to be one of the dangerous movie like that but don't know nothing about.

Gibson's comeback, with its promise of tragic success, comes out just a moment too soon, because his messy private life has clouded the shine of his inspired stand film on the passion and death of Jesus Christ.

Among the film world's top female stars, Meryl Streep and Sandra Bullock are flying higher than most—especially after their twin wins at the recent Golden Globe Film Comedy Actress for Meryl but Drama for Sandra).

Meryl's victory is business as usual, but Sandra's win is big news, since she's best known as a rom-com star. For her to get an award for dramatic acting is nothing short of spectacular. Proof positive that, once actresses are "born again" at 40, they can successfully make career shifts that were well nigh "impossible" a decade ago.

Other stars whose movies fig-

See page G2

Troubled ...

From page G2

her first Hollywood film, "Only Yesterday" and was later nominated for an Oscar for her performance in the World War I romance, "Three Comrades."

Thereafter she starred William Wyler after he divorced her in "The Good Fairy." She appeared in such movies as "Dark Victory" and "Cry Havoc," two films that effectively took advantage of her understated dramatic style—an approach considered "too modern" at the time.

Despite a seemingly flourishing career, Sullavan suffered bouts depression and a haunting problem that worsened through the years.

The actress made her last movies, "We Are Forgotten Me," in 1950, and shortly thereafter, she made her last appearance on Broadway in "The Deep Blue Sea." In 1960, she was found dead in a small motel—the victim of an overdose.